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African Violet

The magazine exclusively dedicated to the growing of beautiful African violets.

May • June 2003

Volume 56

Number 3



AVSA Information

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SHOW SCHEDULE APPROVER: For information on Shows, AVSA Awards and Approving Schedules write to: Patricia Sutton, 1707 S. 77 E Ave., Tulsa, OK 74112. E-mail sutpa01@worldnet.att.net. **Do not send Show Schedules by E-mail - this address is for information ONLY.**

AVSA OFFICE: Jenny Daugeau, Administrative Coordinator, 2375 North Street, Beaumont, TX 77702, 1-800-770-AVSA; 409-839-4725; FAX 409-839-4329. Hours: Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. CST. E-mail avsa@earthlink.net

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ARTICLES BY MEMBERS, COLUMNISTS AND MEMORIALS: Send to Editor.

Please Note: Deadlines - Articles and Columnists: Jan. issue - Oct. 1; Mar. issue - Dec. 1; May issue - Feb. 1; July issue - Apr 1; Sept. issue - June 1; Nov. issue - Aug. 1.

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"AND THE WINNERS ARE...": Send show results to Mary Corondan, 7205 Dillon Ct., Plano, TX 75024.

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MASTER VARIETY LIST:

MVL SUPPLEMENTS: will be published in the AVM. Send any correction and/or description of new cultivars with hybridizer's name to Joe Bruns, 1220 Stratford Lane, Hanover Park, IL 60130.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS: Sent to Associate Members and New Members only. Renewing members receive card on white protective cover of AVM.

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RESEARCH: Send suggested projects for scientific research or names of interested, qualified potential research personnel to Dr. Jeff Smith, 3014 W. Amherst Rd., Muncie, IN 47304.

SHOW ENTRY TAGS: 100 - \$8.00 postpaid. Order from AVSA Office.

QUESTIONS ON HYBRIDIZING: Dr. Jeff Smith, "In Search of New Violets" The Indiana Academy, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306. Web site: avsa.org

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African Violet

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Plumberry Glow
3rd Best New Cultivar
2002 AVSA Convention
Exhibited and Hybridized by:
Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses
Semiminiature



Photo Credit: Paul Sorano

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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.



President's Message



Dear AVSA Members,

If the post office was timely, you will receive this issue of the *African Violet Magazine* just prior to our annual convention in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. If you have not already made plans to be there, it is not too late. Come and join us for what will be a great time among violets and violet friends.

I mentioned the post office and their being timely. It is always interesting to see how the *AVM's* arrive at the Wilson household. We receive multiple copies as members and AVSA board members. They usually do not all arrive at the same time, but are spaced out over several days. I mention this because they were all mailed at the same time. Becker's Printing puts everyone's *AVM* in the postal system all at the same time. How the postal sorting districts and our own local postal system distribute the mail determines how quickly we receive our mail. This is why neighbors sometimes don't receive their copies on the same day. They went out together from Beaumont, Texas but were sorted and distributed separately.

Our extra copies of the *AVM* are given to either the library or interested violet growing non-members. The *AVM* is an excellent way to publicize our great society and its benefits and increase our membership.

Membership continues to be a prime concern of ours. All organizations must continue to attract new members and retain the current members. We are doing a better job of doing both. But, we need to do much more. Costs of publishing and mailing a publication continue to increase. Sustaining what we have does not provide the revenue to meet those increased costs. At a minimum, we need new members to just meet those costs. Of course, we are not content to just meet costs; we want to increase our membership numbers so we add additional content and pictures in our great magazine.

As the affiliates end their current meeting periods and get ready to break for the summer, it is a great time to think of AVSA memberships. Use those extra funds in the treasury to give a gift subscription to the local library and rest home. You will help the overall membership effort and also inform more people of your existence in the community. Maybe it will bring some new members to your local group. Wouldn't that be nice?

I have been reflecting on the past two years as I near the completion of my term as your President. It has been a good two years. Much was accomplished during this period. I would like to take credit for all the accomplishments, but I didn't do the work required to make these things happen. I've noted some of these accomplishments in past President's letters.

Your Board of Directors made it all happen because they really care about this organization. Each of them provided the ideas and the energy to make the ideas work. In many cases they also provided the funds from their own pockets to implement these ideas or projects.

I truly appreciate the Board's dedication to this society. Their volunteering to take the many jobs required to run an organization is appreciated greatly. Please join me in thanking them for a job well done.

Many thanks also go to the ladies in the AVSA office. Jenny, Amy, and Ruth provide the "hands on" contact with our members. We are lucky to have caring folks looking out for our members.

Thanks also go to our great membership. I truly have been honored to be your President. Thanks for the great privilege you granted me. I am not going away, but will be available to serve this society in any way I can.



Sincerely,

John E. (Jack) Wilson
AVSA President

Editor's Notes



Ruth Rumsey • 2375 North Street • Beaumont, Texas 77702
(409) 839-4725 • email rrumsey@earthlink.net

For several years AVSA has supported the African Rainforest Conservancy, formerly the Tanzania Wildlife Fund, through a complimentary ad in this publication (page 63). This conservation group is dedicated to the preservation and restoration of the African rainforests, original home of the *Saintpaulia*.

The Eastern Arc region is a crescent-shaped chain of cool, moist mountain islands rising from a sea of hot, dry savannah. Scientists call it the Galapagos of Africa for its concentration of endemic species of plants and animals found nowhere else in the world.

The conservation groups are working to provide environmental and forest management education to the local citizens and have been very successful in many areas. In the last ten years, local people have planted more than two million trees through reforestation projects.

It has been my privilege to come in contact with several of the dedicated members of this and other conservation organizations, as well as scientists and researchers.

I recently received a copy of **Colin Watkin's** *Saintpaulia* field guide, "The Wild African Violet, an Interim Guide". This booklet is a beautifully produced guide for those interested in the species plants and their natural habitat. It outlines locations and descriptions of each of the species plants and also contains photographs of them. Colin sent me a map outlining the locations of *Saintpaulia* in the wild, reproduced in color on page 37 of this issue. If you are interested in learning more about his book, please see the ad on page 63.

This convention brings many changes. Our President, **Jack Wilson**, will become our Immediate Past President as **Janet Riemer** takes the helm as our new President. The AVSA staff, Jenny, Amy, and I will miss Jack, while at the same time, we're looking forward to working more closely with Janet. Having officers who know and support the staff, encouraging us in our daily work for this fine society, makes our jobs even more enjoyable.

David Buttram has once again provided us with a Vacation Guide. Those of you traveling this summer will be able to plan ahead and visit some of our commercial members. It's a good opportunity to meet those commercial grow-

ers you've seen advertising in the AVM.

With the renewed interest in the Dates' Wasp violets, we're rerunning an article from 1987, written by **Jimmy Dates** (page 26). If you recall a past article that you feel would interest our newer members, please let me know the topic, and I'll look for it.

I'm hearing from club members wanting to utilize information from the AVM for handouts at their spring shows and as part of their educational displays. Remember that your club may also order back issues of the AVM from the office to give out at the show. The cost to the club is only the cost of shipping, so be sure to take advantage of this offer.

Are you in charge of your club's publicity? Please contact me, and I'll be more than happy to supply your local newspaper with a brief article on the history of AVSA, as well as slides of beautiful African violets. We've found that the local and regional newspapers seem to get the word out better than almost any other method, and color photos of African violets enhance any article about a club show.

In this issue, **Al** and **Cathy Cornibe**, For Beginners columnists, address "Watering African Violets". With concise illustrations, explanations of each method, and a listing of the "pros and cons" of each, this is an article you won't want to miss (page 6).

Nancy Robitaille completes her article "Light For African Violets" with Part Two on page 16.

I've taken a suggestion of one of our readers, and on page 54 is an explanation of "Texas Style Potting" from **Pauline Bartholomew's** wonderful book, "Growing to Show".

On pages 40 and 41, find **Jillene Dolister's** article, "Do I Have Bugs?". If you suspect that mealy bugs have invaded your violet collection, Jillene's photos can help you confirm your diagnosis.

Many thanks to those who are contributing original material to the magazine. I appreciate it very much.

I am always open to suggestions for improving the African Violet Magazine. As I have mentioned before, this is YOUR publication. Please do not hesitate to let me know topics you would like to see covered or changes that you feel would make the AVM a better magazine.



THE IMPORTANCE OF MAIL ORDER

by John Klenovich

I live in northern Wisconsin. I do not live at the end of the earth, but I like to joke that you can see it from here. The only places nearby where I can purchase violets on occasion are the grocery or department stores. Many of the plants I bought had good blooms and foliage, but unfortunately I did not know what variety they were. So for me mail order is my main access to violets of quality, and that makes mail order very important to me.

In 2001 I became a member of the AVSA, and in the spring of 2002 I ordered leaves from an advertiser in African Violet Magazine. I had good luck with them, though I lost a miniature trailer. After reading Pauline Bartholomew's article "Unpacking Plant Shipments" in the March/April 2003 issue of African Violet Magazine, I believe that now I could save it. Because of those mail order leaves, I now have a collection that

includes two miniatures, two semiminiatures, and three standards I could not have gotten around here.

After reading Tina Moreno's article "The Wonderful World of Wasps" in the July/August issue of African Violet Magazine, I became interested in these violets that I did not know even existed. In February of this year, I ordered some plants from another advertiser in African Violet Magazine and ordered every wasp they had. Now I have to wait and hope that they have them in stock when summer arrives.

The nearest affiliate club is about one hundred fifty miles away from me. And, I won't be able to get down to Baton Rouge in April to purchase violets, so I'm afraid that mail order is my lifeline to the exciting world of African violets with all their diversity in bloom and foliage.



In Memory

Ardath Miller



Ardath Miller of Manchester, Missouri, passed away on February 21, 2003. She left behind a loving family and many sad African violet enthusiasts. In every organization there are people who are willing to lead, to follow, to be on committees, to grow lots of plants, to show lots of plants, to judge, etc., but in the case of Ardath Miller, she was willing and very able to do all of these things. She was president of West County AVC, Gateway AVC, St. Louis AV Judges' Council, and Metropolitan St. Louis AVC. She also served as an officer in Missouri Valley AVC. At the 1995 Convention in St. Louis, she was Entries Coordinator and Assistant

Show Chairman. Ardath has always been generous with her knowledge of violets and AVSA. She was an excellent judge and very kind in her treatment of participants.



Lois Sprayberry

Lois Sprayberry passed away February 27, 2003 in Orlando, Florida. Lois was past president of Central Florida AVS. She was an Advanced Judge and rarely missed an AV Council of Florida meeting or show. Her educational tables and horticultural programs were outstanding and very much appreciated. Lois will be long remembered and greatly missed.

**A CD of the AVSA Baton Rouge
Convention will be available from the
AVSA office in late May.
The cost is \$9.95.
Reserve your copy now!**





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e-mail: cathycornibe@aol.com

WATERING AFRICAN VIOLETS

Several readers asked us to do a column on watering African violets.

The most important thing is that you need to spend a little time experimenting (on only one or two plants at a time) to find out what works the best for you.

You also need to find out what you enjoy doing so that you can look forward to watering your African violets.

OUR GOALS:

There are four main goals that we want our watering methods to accomplish:

1. To keep our African violet soil "moist" (neither too wet, nor too dry).
2. To save time.
3. To self-water our plants at a show.
4. To self-water our plants while we're away from home.

WATERING METHODS:

Although there are many self-watering methods that can accomplish the goals listed above, our favorites are wicking and Moist-rites. Our miniatures, semiminiatures, species, and the majority of our trailers and standards are wicked. The rest

of the trailers and standards are in Moist-rites. New plants are top watered only until we can repot them for a self-watering method.

Since there are so many different watering methods, we've included a table with the most common ones. Also included are instructions, notes, pros, cons, and tips.

HOW OFTEN TO WATER:

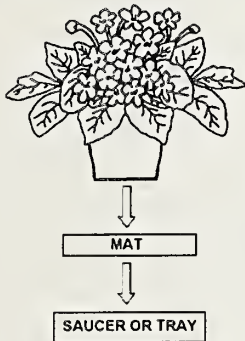
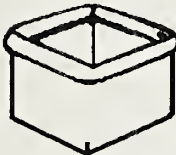
Your plants may need to be watered more or less often than ours depending on your method of watering, and variables such as your soil mix, temperature, humidity, and type of pot.

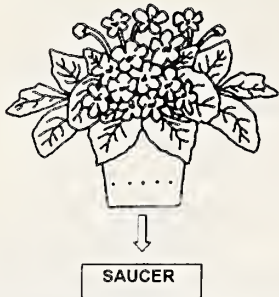
Under our conditions, top watering is required twice per week, Moist-rites go empty and need to be refilled approximately every two weeks, and reservoirs are topped off every few weeks as needed.

PRECAUTION:

To avoid spreading a problem, we very rarely let our African violets share the same water source. When we do, it is only if we are sure that they are all healthy.

WATERING METHOD:	INSTRUCTIONS & NOTES:	PROS, CONS, TIPS:
TOP WATERING 	1. A watering can, with long spout, can be used to slowly pour lukewarm water over the soil until it is moist. 2. Pour water in more than one spot so that the entire plant is watered. 3. Throw away the excess water that drains out from the bottom of the pot.	<u>Pros:</u> 1. An easy method for beginners. 2. Flushes out excess fertilizer salts. <u>Cons:</u> 1. It can be very time consuming. 2. While you're away from home, someone needs to water your plants.

WICKING 	1. One end of the wet wick goes through the bottom of the pot and into the moist soil (about half way up the pot). The other end is inserted into a reservoir filled with water. 2. To help the capillary action start, top water until a little water is seen coming down the wick. Notes: 1. Wicks can be made out of any material (such as yarn, thin strips of ladies' stockings, twine) that absorbs and holds water without rotting. 2. Reservoirs can be any container, with a lid, that will hold water.	<u>Pros:</u> 1. Wicking can save time. 2. Multiple plants can be wicked from a common container (saucer, tray) of water, if they are all healthy. 3. Wicking can self-water your plants while you are away from home. <u>Cons:</u> 1. Capillary action can stop and must be restarted if roots grow on the wick and cut off the water, or if the wick, soil, or reservoir dries out. <u>Tips:</u> 1. Don't let the reservoirs go dry. 2. If you're not repotting, use a knitting needle or piece of bent wire to guide the wick up the bottom of the pot and into the soil.
MATTING 	1. Cut a piece of matting to fit inside a saucer, or tray. 2. Add water until the matting is wet. 3. Sit plants on top of the wet matting. 4. To help the capillary action start, top water each plant until water is seen coming out of the bottom of its pot. Note: 1. Matting can be made out of any material (even an old blanket) that absorbs and holds water without rotting.	<u>Pros:</u> 1. Increases humidity around the plant. 2. Multiple plants can be watered on a common mat, if they are all healthy. <u>Cons:</u> 1. Don't let the matting go dry. 2. Capillary action can stop and must be restarted if the mat or soil dries out. 3. While you're away from home, someone needs to water the matting. 4. Most matting will need to be washed (it gets dirty). Some material stretches during washing; it will need to be re-cut to fit inside the same tray or saucer.
MOIST-RITE 	1. Before repotting, fill the Moist-rite with water. Watch the water flow out from each of the 4 holes (bottom of inside walls). If a hole is plugged, use a hatpin to unplug it. 2. To repot, start with a dry, empty Moist-rite. Add a layer of coarse sand, then a layer of coarse perlite, and last, the plant and potting mix. 3. Top water, slowly pouring 2 to 4 ounces of water into the soil. 4. After 3-4 days, fill the Moist-rite with water and reinsert the plug.	<u>Pros:</u> 1. Moist-rites can save time. 2. They self-water your plants at a show or while you are away from home. <u>Cons:</u> 1. A crack in a Moist-rite can affect the amount of water supplied to that plant. 2. If you grow for show, miniatures and semiminiatures can get too large. <u>Tips:</u> 1. Don't remove the plug and refill a Moist-rite unless it is empty.
TEXAS-STYLE	1. Drill holes (horizontally) about 1 1/2 inches up from the bottom of the pot. 2. Add coarse perlite into the bottom of the pot, until it reaches the drilled holes, then add your soil and plant.	<u>Pros:</u> 1. If you want larger standard plants, try this method.

	3. Sit pot in saucer. Add water to the saucer until it is right below the holes (this allows air to reach the roots). Note: 1. If standing water gets cold in your growing area, after 30 to 60 minutes throw away any excess water that is still left in the saucer.	<u>Cons:</u> 1. If you grow for show, miniatures and semiminiatures can get too large. 2. While you're away from home, someone needs to add water to the saucers. <u>Tip:</u> 1. A taller pot will give you more room for the layer of perlite.
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After you decide on a watering method, you still need to prepare the water and transport it to your plants.

PREPARING THE WATER:

Lukewarm water is recommended for African violets. Cold water can chill their roots causing leaf spotting and brittle, curled foliage.

Although we prefer tap water, bottled water or water from reverse osmosis can also be used. Softened water is not recommended for African violets.

We add DeChlor (sold at pet stores) to remove the chlorine from our tap water, and then add fertilizer.

TRANSPORTING THE WATER TO YOUR PLANTS:

The obvious method to transport the water to your African violets is manually. You must carry the water in some type of watering can or container. But, water is heavy, so the more plants you have, the more work this becomes.

Water can also be transported to your plants mechanically. Basically, you will need water, pressure, and a means of delivery.

At some garden shops, you can find tubing with an adapter at one end to fit your faucet and a delivery wand at the other end. However, with this method, it is hard to control the water temperature, and impossible to remove the chlorine/chloramines, or add fertilizer.

You can use a 5-gallon plastic bucket, a submersible fountain pump, and tubing from the pump to a delivery tube. But, a submersible pump can get algae on it, which smells awful. Although some growers can use an algaecide in their water, when we combined our tap water with an algaecide, our foliage became brittle.

OUR SYSTEM:

At our peak, we had twelve plant stands with a total of thirty-nine 4-foot shelves, so we needed a more robust

system. The one that Al designed and built consists of a heavy-duty 20-gallon trash can on top of a base with wheels, a diaphragm pump that sits on our counter, a filter, a pressure regulator, tubing, a flow regulator, and a wand with an on/off lever. See the diagram below.

It is very important that the water is filtered before it enters the pump, as any solids will cause additional wear and damage to the pump.

Our plant room is adjacent to a half bath with a sink and counter. We installed a quick release hose coupling, made for hooking up a portable dishwasher, on the faucet. An 8-foot hose, connected to the coupling, is used to fill our trash can with water.

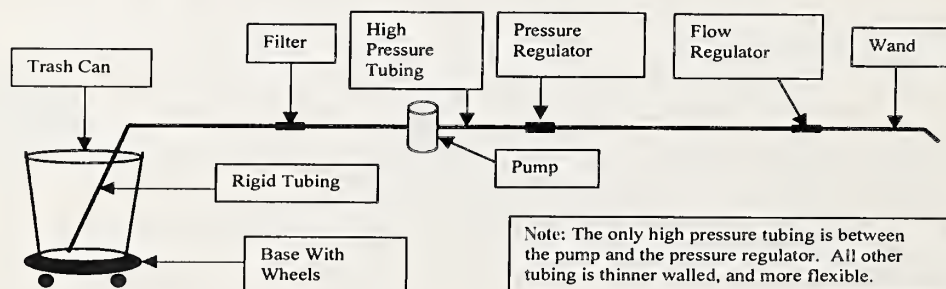
We marked a scale on the inside of the trash can to show us how much water is in it, so we can calculate the amount of DeChlor and fertilizer to add. When not in use, our trash can is kept empty (no water in it) to eliminate algae growth.

We used black tubing throughout the system. Since light will not penetrate it, algae will not form. High pressure tubing was used between the pump and pressure regulator. We used 50-feet of flexible tubing for the remainder of the system. This is long enough to reach all of our reservoirs and Moist-rites.

A wand with an on/off lever is needed to stop the water flow between plants, reservoirs and Moist-rites. Most hardware stores sell these wands as replacement parts for garden sprayers. Use a plastic one to avoid corrosion.

Our system has been in service for approximately five years, with no problems, and only periodic cleaning of the filter is needed.

There are many ways to connect the parts of the system that you decide to build. Work with a sales person at your hardware store or building supply center to determine the parts that you will need. If you want the specific information (dimensions, brands, fittings, etc.) for our system, just email us or send us a SASE.



Registration Report



Janice Brunns
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janice@qwip.net

A name reservation costs \$1.00 and is valid for two years, after which time it may be extended two years for an additional \$1.00. Registration of the plant is \$5.00 unless completed within the reservation period, in which case the balance is then \$4.00. Please make check payable to AVSA.

Jack Cochran – Wagoner, OK

- ***Okie Blaster** (9148) 12/2/02 (J. Cochran) Semidouble-double red ruffled star. Medium green, plain, serrated. **Standard**
- ***Okie Love Bug** (9149) 12/2/02 (J. Cochran) Single-semidouble red-violet ruffled. **Variegated** medium green, pink and cream, plain. **Standard**
- ***Okie Snapper** (9150) 12/2/02 (J. Cochran) Single-semidouble purple-red large ruffled star. Dark green, quilted/red back. **Standard**
- ***Okie Sun Glo** (9151) 12/2/02 (J. Cochran) Single rose-pink star. Medium green, plain. **Standard**
- ***Okie Surprise** (9152) 12/2/02 (J. Cochran) Single pink sticktite pansy/raspberry edge. **Variegated** medium green and pink, plain. **Standard**

Thad Scaggs – Hernando Beach, FL

- ***Mother's Love** (9153) 12/2/02 (T. Scaggs) Double medium pink pansy/magenta sparkle overlay, magenta edge. **Variegated** medium green, white, ruffled, serrated. **Large**

Shirley Sanders – San Antonio, TX

- ***Shirl's First Baby** (9154) 12/24/02 (S. Sanders) Single light blue sticktite pansy/darker veins. **Variegated** medium green and white, plain. **Semiminiature**
- ***Shirl's Grape Lollipop** (9155) 12/24/02 (S. Sanders) Single grape sticktite pansy. **Variegated** dark green and pink, plain. **Semiminiature**
- ***Shirl's Happy Tears** (9156) 12/24/02 (S. Sanders) Single white sticktite pansy/variable green edge. **Variegated** dark green, white and pink, plain. **Semiminiature**

- ***Shirl's New Life** (9157) 12/24/02 (S. Sanders) Single-semidouble fuchsia pansy/white edge. Dark green, plain. **Small standard**
- ***Shirl's Pink Puff** (9158) 12/24/02 (S. Sanders) Semidouble-double pink two-tone frilled. **Variegated** dark green, white and pink, plain. **Semiminiature**
- ***Shirl's Ruffled Petticoat** (9159) 12/24/02 (S. Sanders) Double light blue ruffled/white edge. **Variegated** medium green, white, and pink, plain. **Semiminiature**
- ***Shirl's Sheer Luck** (9160) 12/24/02 (S. Sanders) Single pink sticktite pansy/blue overlay. **Variegated** dark green and pink, plain. **Semiminiature**

C. Craig Coleman – Greensboro, NC

- ***Coleman's Elizabeth P.** (9161) 1/23/03 (C. Coleman) Single-semidouble fuchsia ruffled/white edge. Medium green, ovate, quilted, scalloped/red back. **Standard**
- ***Coleman's Toni** (9162) 1/23/03 (C. Coleman) Single-semidouble pink ruffled/variable white edge. Medium green, ovate, quilted, scalloped/red back. **Standard**
- ***Coleman's Vida Barrus** (9163) 1/23/03 (C. Coleman) Single-semidouble pink ruffled/fuchsia overlay. Medium green, ovate, quilted, scalloped/red back. **Standard**

Janet Stromborg – Denmark, WI

- ***Allegro Pirouette** (9164) 1/27/03 (J. Stromborg) Single dark magenta sticktite frilled pansy/variable white edge. Dark green, round, holly/red back. **Standard**
- ***Allegro Roulette** (9165) 1/27/03 (J. Stromborg) Single-semidouble dark magenta ruffled pansy/frilled edge. Dark green, round, ruffled, scalloped/red back. **Standard**

NAME RESERVATIONS

Janet Stromborg – Denmark, WI

- (All preceded by Allegro prefix) * Aspenglow * Autograph
- * Daydream Believer * Hello Stranger * Late Winter * Lorena
- * Loco Motion * Meadow Beauty * Moody River * Shameless
- * Spanish Eyes * Steal Away * Summer Breeze * Twinkle Twinkle *

In Search of New Violets



Dr. Jeff Smith
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When hybridizers plan a cross, they may talk about adding in the flower color from the pollen parent or the foliage type of the seed parent, as if each trait was a separate ingredient to be added into the recipe for making an offspring. While it is convenient to talk about the traits in this fashion, it is an oversimplification of how traits are inherited. In reality, the various traits of an African violet plant are strung together on the chromosomes like beads on a necklace. Each offspring inherits 15 chromosomes or necklaces of traits from the pollen parent and from the seed parent. Because the traits are attached in this manner, the offspring receives a "package" of traits that are usually expressed together. Traits that are inherited as groups or "packages" are said to be linked traits. The cause of the linkage is that the traits are physically close together on the same chromosome. While it is sometimes possible to break a linkage, the traits in question are almost always inherited together. Some examples of linkage are: wasp flower shape and bustled foliage, raspberry edges and pink/red flower color, holly foliage and ruffled flowers.

Q: *Since bustled foliage is linked with wasp shaped flowers, will it ever be possible to get wasp flowers on other types of foliage?*

A: I recently saw a picture of a seedling from a cross of 'Biscayne Trail' X 'Celery'. 'Biscayne Trail' has girl foliage and 'Celery' has longifolia bustled foliage. At least one of the offspring (tentatively named 'Neverland') appears to have highly lobed girl foliage and wasp shaped flowers. Both girl foliage and bustled foliage are genetic dominants, and in theory, both should be expressed when present. Since bustled foliage is usually linked to wasp shaped flowers, any plant that shows wasp shaped flowers should be carrying the bustled foliage trait. 'Neverland' clearly has wasp shaped flowers, but does this mean it also has bustled foliage? It's possible that when girl and bustled foliage come together, girl foliage dominates the bustled foliage trait. Or, the two leaf traits may be interacting

together. This idea is supported by the observation that the girl foliage is highly lobed, an over-expression of the girl trait when it was inherited from only one parent.

If 'Neverland' proves to be stable, a self-pollination cross should help determine if it contains both girl and bustled foliage. The F2 offspring should produce plants that show either girl foliage or bustled foliage, as the two traits should then separate from each other. It will be interesting to study 'Neverland' and see what its genetic composition actually is.

Q: *Can wasp shaped flowers be combined with double flower petals?*

A: Yes, I have seen a picture of a Japanese hybrid that had exactly this combination. The center petals were a semi-double tuft, surrounded by the 5 distinctly wasp shaped outer petals. The flowers were very attractive. This combination of traits would be easy to get in one generation. Crossing a wasp flowered plant (a genetic dominant) times a double or semi-double plant (another genetic dominant) should produce offspring with the double dominant combination. About 25% of the offspring should have the desired combination of traits. This is a cross I would encourage more hybridizers to consider making.

Q: *In your report from the Gesneriaceae Workshop, you mentioned that because of their close genetic relationship, there was a possibility of hybrids between genus Streptocarpus with African violets, genus Saintpaulia. Have such hybrids already been created?*

A: I have seen at least two reports of hybrids between these two genera. However, neither of the reports showed pictures of the hybrid plants nor did they describe how the hybrids were created and what was their evidence to support hybrid status. Until such evidence is given, I'm skeptical about these reports.

This type of information may be critical to the AVSA. If hybrids can be created between the two genera, this supports

the scientists' claims for lumping the two genera together. However, if hybrids continually fail to form between the two genera, this would be evidence to maintain *Saintpaulia* as a distinct, separate genus. I would encourage the AVSA membership to make attempts to hybridize the two genera, but please keep careful records so that the necessary evidence will be available. I would be interested in hearing about all attempts (both negative and successful) as documentation for this classification problem.

Q: *Will seedlings with unruly foliage have the potential to grow into show plants?*

A: As a general rule, seedlings with unruly foliage are unlikely to settle down and produce plants with good show foliage. However, if the seedling has been stressed by competition with other seedlings for light, resources, or space, the unruliness of the foliage may be due to environmental conditions rather than genetic factors. In these cases, the foliage should settle down once the plant is given a good growing environment. If you want to use foliage traits to select seedlings with good show potential, be sure to give them

plenty of space and good growing conditions. This will help you select good plants early and save on growing space.

Q: *How early after germination can seedlings with variegated foliage be identified?*

A: If the seed parent had crown variegation or leaf margin variegation (Tommie Lou type), nearly 100% of the offspring should be variegated. However, the amount of variegation in an individual seedling can vary widely, especially in the leaf margin variegation type. In some cases, the cotyledons or seed leaves after germination will show variegation. These seedlings will usually produce plants with a strong expression of leaf variegation. Selecting these plants will allow a hybridizer to identify plants that should have strong variegation very quickly. Seedlings with solid green cotyledons should eventually produce plants with variegation, but the amount of variegation may be weak. However, these plants may be the faster growers since they contain more green leaf area. If space permits, I suggest potting up a range of seedlings showing various amounts of variegation. However, if space is very limited, pot up those seedlings with good amounts of variegation in the cotyledons.

FOLIAGE TYPES

African violet foliage ranges in color from light green through a dark mahogany green. Markings on variegated foliage (in addition to shades of green) can be white, cream, light yellow, or rosy shades from light pink to a deep wine red. Beside color, the shapes of the leaves are also distinctive. The more common foliage types are:



Compound, Wasp, Bustle, or Piggyback: Leaves are compound with one large and two smaller lobes.



Girl: Deeply scalloped leaves, usually rounded or heart-shaped with white to yellow markings at the base of each leaf. These markings can extend to the leaf blades and edges of the leaf.



Holly: Heavily crested leaves with the leaf edges curled forward or bent back with exaggerated wavy edges resembling holly in form.



Longifolia or Spider: Narrow pointed strap-like leaves with either plain or wavy edges.



Plain or Tailored: Plain in texture and form it is sometimes known as standard or boy type foliage.



Pointed: Ends of the leaves come to a definite point.



Quilted: Leaves have distinct raised areas between the veins. Some leaves have pie-crust edging.



Ruffled, Fringed, Wavy, or Fluted: Leaves have serrated or ragged edges.



Spoon, Ovate, or Cupped-up: Leaves are concave with high edges like a spoon.



Supreme: Leaves are thick, hairy, and quilted with strong pencil-like petioles.



Variegated: Leaves (in addition to shades of green) can be marked with white, cream, light yellow, or rosy shades from light pink to a deep wine red.

A. Variegated foliage: Defines all variegation other than two listed below.

B. Crown variegation

C. Mosaic variegation

Question Box



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As is always the case, we are far too busy to reply to mail (or e-mail), though we do read all of it. Should you want a personal reply, we are more than willing to answer phone calls made during our normal business hours (12-5 pm EST), since we can work and talk at the same time. For those with access to the internet, we can be reached at robsviolet@aol.com or via our web-site at www.robsviolet.com. The web-site also contains a wealth of cultural information.

At this writing we're in the middle of an unusually cold and snowy winter. The heating bills are killing us, but the plants look great - lots of color and bloom. The worse it gets outside, the more we appreciate doing what we do for a living. Who else in our climate gets to spend all day in a warm, humid place surrounded by beautiful blooming plants? Those who live in warmer climes can never fully appreciate the positive effect that plants can have on one's psyche.

By the time you read this, of course, things should be much improved weather-wise. Many of those plants will have already made their way with us to the convention show in Baton Rouge, as well as a half-dozen other shows. Here's hoping you had the chance to see them, meet some new friends, and come home with a better appreciation for all that our hobby gives us. If you didn't, start planning for next year!

QUESTION: *I have brown scarring on the backs of my lower leaves. Why?*

ANSWER: This is a question we received by phone. We didn't immediately have an answer until he happened to mention that he grew in clay pots, and also wondered why the bottom row of leaves was bent over the pot rims. The culprits, of course, were the clay pots but, since we hadn't grown violets in these in nearly 30 years, it didn't quickly come to mind. Besides their weight, expense, and difficulty to clean (and keep clean), scarring of the petioles and undersides of leaves can be a problem presented by clay pots. Being porous, the pot absorbs the water (and whatever is added to it) as well as the soil. The water will evaporate and the pot will dry, but the some of the fertilizer remains within the clay, most noticeably on the

pot rim-like a ring on a bathtub. These accumulate over time and can burn, or "scar" the undersides of leaves and their petioles when they come in contact with the pot rim. This can be more of a problem for African violets, which produce leaves in a flat rosette, than for plants that grow more upright.

A solution for those who prefer to grow violets in clay pots is to create a barrier between the leaves and the pot rim. One simple solution is to cut thin strips of aluminum foil and fold them over the pot rim. Using a glue gun, you might also apply a thin bead of glue around the pot rim-or apply a bead of silicone or bath-tub sealant. Another is to cut thin nylon tubing (like the kind found in tropical fish stores), lengthwise, then secure them onto the pot rim. Some exhibitors use the latter method even with plastic pots, since it helps protect the lower leaves of large showplants from the sharp rims on some plastic pots ("rolled", or rounded, rims are better for this reason).

That said, clay pots are attractive and can make plants look even more so. Just be aware of their shortcomings and adjust your culture accordingly. Because they are porous, soil will dry much more quickly than when potted in plastic. Water is evaporated only from the soil surface with plastic pots, but from soil and pot surface with clay pots. This means that plants with small root systems, like miniatures, will dry very quickly in clay pots and will need to be watered quite frequently. Also, very light, porous, soilless mixes that work so well with plastic pots may dry too quickly in clay pots. A heavier mix that retains more water may work better when using clay pots, unless one plans to keep the plant and soil constantly wet. Finally, if you want the advantages of plastic pots but the appearance of clay, you might simply grow in plastic and slip plant and pot into a slightly larger clay pot!

QUESTION: *My sister sent me some "Neem Oil" to use for powdery mildew, but I haven't a clue how to use it. Could you tell me?*

ANSWER: "Neem Oil" is processed from seeds of the neem tree, native to eastern India and Burma, and is a wonderful product that can be effective as an insecticide, miticide,

and fungicide that is safe for home use. It biodegrades quickly, and exposure to neem oil poses no threat to humans or other higher animals, or to "beneficial" predator insects (only to those who feed on plants). Though it doesn't directly kill plant-feeding insects, it does act as an irritant, discouraging them from feeding on the plant. For this reason, it's best used regularly as a preventative, or to attack pest problems in their early stages.

We've found its best use is as a treatment for powdery mildew, the very fine, white powder that appears on leaves and, sometimes, on blossom stems. Though powdery mildew rarely will kill a plant, it will scar the surface of leaves and lead to short-lived blossoms. It tends to be a particular problem when there is cool, stagnant, humid air. Spraying with neem is an easy, immediate, non-toxic solution for dealing with powdery mildew on a large number of plants. There is minimal damage to open blossoms (a few varieties seem to be more sensitive), and leaves will look shiny and clean.

We spray with 100% pure neem oil, at a rate of 1 tsp. per quart of water. To this, add 1/4 tsp. of liquid dish soap, which is needed to mix the oil well in the water. Spray all plant surfaces generously with a fine mist. Best of all, it's not toxic to humans—we don't use either masks or gloves when using it. That said, don't be so careless as to swallow it or spray it into your eyes (not lethal, but not pleasant either). As for the odor, it smells a lot like sesame oil. To store neem oil, keep at room temperatures (it thickens if chilled), and shake well before using.

QUESTION: *Your shipment arrived safe and sound. After one week growing under my lights, 'Rob's Calypso Beat' put forth additional flowers and one spike that came in purple. Is that unusual?*

ANSWER: This variety should have pink blooms with purple fantasy speckles. The plant we sent was true to this description.

Unfortunately, most multicolor and "fantasy" blooms are more genetically unstable than those with blooms of solid colors. This means that sometimes they will produce blooms of a solid color. This is even more likely when the plant is stressed, especially if grown for long periods in very warm conditions (it's more of a problem in summer). Since it's just the one bloom stalk that's done this, it's likely to be a "freak" occurrence - the plant should bloom its proper color in the future. If you plan on propagating the plant by leaf, be sure not to use any which has produced the "wrong" color blossoms.

QUESTION: *I grow some of my violets in a window and they do well there, except for the winter when they don't seem to bloom very much. I've added florescent light above the plants and really like how they look with the extra light, especially at night or when they days are dark.*

Would there be any problem in keeping the light on all the time?

ANSWER: So long as the light isn't too intense, probably not, at least during the winter when you don't seem to be getting much in the way of natural light anyway. Though prevailing wisdom says otherwise, our experience is that violets can be successfully grown even when not given periods of darkness. We have two areas in our shop where many plants, including violets, are grown with 24 hours of light. Both of these receive light from both natural and artificial sources. We do this for much the same reason—it makes the shop windows more attractive at night to passersby. Of course, if you are doing this for your own pleasure, there's no need to keep plants illuminated while you're asleep!

As for whether your violets benefit, leave this decision up to them. If they bloom and the foliage is green and grows well, then the plant is happy and the light is fine. If they are receiving too much light, as might be the case during times of the year when there is more sunlight, foliage may become pale and brittle, new growth may become crowded in the plant center, and leaves may "hug" the pot. If this becomes the case, reduce the time and/or intensity of the artificial light you are providing.

QUESTION: *I have a couple of violets that always seem to get extra sets of leaves growing from the center of the plant.*

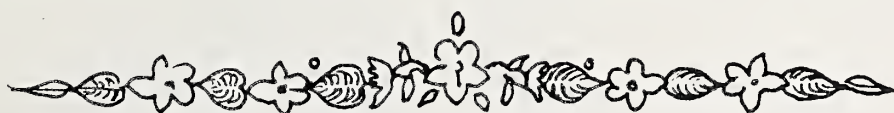
Eventually, I have to divide these plants when they get bigger but the problem will reappear. What can I do?

ANSWER: Unfortunately, "double crowning" (suckering in the plant center) is a genetic condition that won't simply go away by removing the additional center growth or dividing plants. If this has happened more than once with the same plant, it will likely continue to happen. Stress also is a factor, since plants subjected to more of it are more likely to double-crown or sucker.

Excessive heat, light, or neglect in watering or potting can all lead to excessive suckering and double-crowns. Disbudding can also be a factor, since many plants don't seem to do this unless grown for show and disbudded.

The only real solution is to not grow these varieties, or at least not to propagate using these plants. If others grow the same variety without having this problem, you might try to acquire a plant propagated from them. They may have a different genetic "strain" of that variety that is less likely to double-crown. We've had some older varieties that have developed this problem, and will propagate them, select those plants that grow the best, then propagate only from these, and so on. If we're lucky, we can eliminate the problem given enough time.

Name of columnist replying is in bold print



AVSA Building Maintenance Fund

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AVS of Fort Walton Beach, FL.....	\$100.00
<i>disbanned</i>	
Richmond AVS, Richmond, VA	75.00
Sweet Water AVS, Bay Shore, NY	15.00
Betty E. Curry, Rivervale, NJ.	5.00
Richard Curry, Rivervale, NJ.	5.00
Debbie L. Hansen, Saint Peters, MO	10.00
Kay Nell Warren, Henderson, TX	5.00
TOTAL.....	\$215.00

Lake Shore AVS, Woodstock, IL	\$25.00
Tristate AV Council, Lafayette, NJ	10.00
Smith's Country Cottage AV's	30.00
Sue Ann Blackmon, Conyers, GA	25.00
Janice & Joe Bruns, Hanover Park, IL	10.00
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Donalda Ferguson, Montgomery, AL	10.00
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Lynda E. Vaillancourt, Durango, CO	25.00
Judy Walton, Allen Park, MI.....	5.00
John B. Warren, Newburgh, NY	10.00
Doris R. Weaver, Stockton, CA	1.00
TOTAL.....	\$430.00

AVSA BOOSTER FUND

Shirley Berger

4343 Schumacher Rd - 196E • Sebring, FL 33872

CONTRIBUTIONS December 1, 2002 - January 31, 2003

John D. Sullivan, Danville, VA	\$ 5.00
Margie Scott, Richmond, VA	5.00
Howard A. Ray, Niskayuna, NY	5.00
Martha George, Oklahoma City, OK.....	10.00
Janeen Dougherty, Norristown, NJ.....	10.00
Anne Tinari, Huntingdon Valley, PA	25.00
<i>In loving memory of a dear friend, Ruth Warren</i>	
Ethel O. Spurlin, Mililani, HI	20.00
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<i>In memory of Ruth Warren</i>	
Bay State AVS, Framingham, MA	50.00
<i>In memory of Ruth Warren</i>	
Sue Taylor, Tulsa, OK	5.00

Wilma Waterstreet, Sturgeon Bay, WI	\$5.00
North Star AVC, Minneapolis, MN	30.00
<i>In memory of Nina Podany</i>	
Lakes Area Violet Growers, Scandia, MN	25.00
<i>In memory of Don Ness</i>	
Sweetwater AVS, Bay Shore, NY	15.00
Wildwood Garden Club, Mentor, OH	50.00
<i>In lieu of speaker's fee - Gertrude Morabito</i>	
Mid-Atlantic AVS, Annapolis, MD	500.00
Victoria J. Hartmann, San Mateo, CA.....	5.00
Mathilde Ginchereau, Lewiston, ME	5.00
Elizabeth Burke, New Providence, NJ.....	5.00
TOTAL	\$ 800.00

Boyce Edens Research Fund

Marlene J. Buck • 17235 N. 106th Avenue • Sun City, AZ 85373-1958

Donations received from December 1, 2002 - January 31, 2003

Sweet Water AVS, Bay Shore, NY	\$15.00
Pat Fawcett, Phoenix, AZ	5.00
Ken & Vera Parker, Stockton, CA	20.00
<i>In memory of Don Ness, a great hybridizer and friend</i>	
Richmond AVS, Richmond, VA	25.00
Ventura County AVS, Ventura, CA	10.00
Central Florida AVS, Orlando, FL.....	25.00
<i>In memory of Lois Sprayberry</i>	
Bonnie Journell, Greencastle, IN	3.00
Dora C. Parla, Raytown, MO	5.00

John B. Warren, Newburgh, NY	\$10.00
Sue Ann Blackmon, Conyers, GA	25.00
Christine W. Davis, Harrison, ME	5.00
Sherrill Morrison, Broken Arrow, OK.....	5.00
Mary R. Parker, Sandy, OR.	10.00
Mary J. Straka, Tampa, FL	5.00
Donalda Ferguson, Montgomery, AL.....	10.00
Janice A. Bruns, Hanover Park, IL.....	10.00
Mike Lovell, San Antonio, TX	5.00

Vintage Violets



Barbara Elkin
Vintage Violets Committee
2855 Gayle Lane
Auburn, CA 95602-9674
email: bjabar@earthlink.net

MARRIED TOO LONG?

When Jack and I were first married, times were tough for us. The year was 1949. He (Jack) tells people the story about us having only two potatoes in the house and that I put one in a glass of water. Maybe that's a little exaggerated, because they were yams not potatoes, and sweet potato vines are pretty. I have always loved plants. All kinds of plants were for me. Some inside, more outside, you get the idea. Housework is another thing altogether. All this was before I discovered what could be done with violets.

Now the yard waits, the house still waits, and Jack waits. I have really turned into a plant freak. Vintage Violets are the biggest love of my life after, of course, Jack. Thank you JoAnn for the listing of Garnet Elf, my all time favorite.

Marriage has nothing to do with my missing the Baton Rouge convention. I didn't notice the change of dates. I still thought Memorial Day was always to be the time for conventions. See what I get for taking things for granted. I did note that Tucson is in April. Never will I take anything regarding convention for granted again. Will miss you all.

It gives me a good feeling to be able to fill your requests for Vintage Violets.

My heartfelt thanks to all of you that have shared your treasures.

This month's **AVSA Most Wanted** are: Blue Warrior and Lovey Dove. Why only two? I was able to fill the other requests with a source.



“*And the winners are ...*”



Mary J. Corondan
7205 Dillon Court
Plano, TX 75024

TRISTATE AV COUNCIL, NY – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Tiger, Lela Marie, Picasso; Best in Show/Best Standard: Picasso, **David Tooker**. 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Picturesque, Rhapsodie Mary, Moonbeams; 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Dean's Legacy, Rob's Rinky Dink, Rob's Soliloquy; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Ron Ennis**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection:

Rob's Kid Wheezy, Irish Flirt, Thunder Surprise; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Kid Wheezy; Best Miniature: Little White Beauty; Best Trailer: Dresden Doll, **Robert Kurzynski**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia grandifolia* #299, **Fred Hill**. Best Gesneriad: *Kohleria* 'Manchu', **Judy Padalino**. Best Design, **Jan Murasko**. Design Sweepstakes, **Karyn Cichocki**.

LIGHT FOR AFRICAN VIOLETS

Part Two

by Nancy Robitaille

Light Needs Can Vary

One of the curious phenomena noted when growing African violets, which are, after all, just variations on a single plant, is that different cultivars have different light needs. I suppose it is a bit like people. Some of us can take full summer sun without any reaction while others need protection from even weaker spring rays or we'll burn. It is, therefore, very helpful to know that the intensity of light given off by fluorescent tubes varies. Plants placed dead center will receive more light than those at the edge of the light garden while the dimmest spots of all are found at either end of the tubes. Also, you can raise light-loving plants on inverted pots to give them better light. By playing with these inherent differences in intensity, you can find a perfect place for all your African violets. What's more, you can also accommodate everything from cacti to ferns in the same light garden if you so desire.

Chloroplasts, the organs which make photosynthesis possible, are found in all green parts of the plant, and notably in the leaves, which are the main agents of photosynthesis. But are they located equally through all leaves? Variegated African violets with a lot of white areas have few chloroplasts in their leaves and, in variegated sections, little or no photosynthesis occurs. In the case of variegated violets, then the green portion of the leaf must do additional duty. This is why variegated plants need more intense light than green plants. Place variegated plants near the center of the tubes or a bit closer to the light source than plants with entirely green leaves.

The color of a plant's flower is a good indicator of the light it needs. Generally speaking, saintpaulias with pink, white, or other pale-colored flowers should be placed at the edges and the ends of the light garden where the light is less intense. Plants with flowers of darker shades - purple, dark blue, red, etc - will do better at the center of the fixture. The same goes for leaf color: darker leaves generally need more light than paler ones. Problems may arise when you have a pink or white flowered plant with dark leaves as darker leaves need more light, yet light-colored flowers may become limp under center lights. Obviously, some adjustment to the rule will be necessary, but by moving your plants around according to their reactions, you'll find a spot for any African violet under lights.

Young seedlings and baby plants, according to some sources, need more light than mature plants. These should be placed closer to the light source by placing them on an overturned pot. Be very careful that they do not receive too much light and become bleached.

Effects of Too Much light

Sometimes non-variegated saintpaulias begin to change from a normal green to a yellowish hue. This is an indication that they are receiving too much light. When the plant is removed from its light source, its normal coloration should return. Plants which are subject to this sort of problem simply need less light than the others and should be placed at the ends of the tubes.

When African violets receive far too much light, their growth may become unnaturally compact with the leaves bunched and tightened in the center. In fact, the symptoms of excess light may mimic those of the dreaded cyclamen mite. If you suspect the plants have received too much light, take them out of the stand and isolate them. If mites are involved, other symptoms will develop like streaked flowers, overly hairy foliage, ash gray centers, etc. If no other symptoms develop within a few weeks, replace the plants under lights...but in a less central spot or a bit further from the tubes. You can also give them shorter "days", thus decreasing the amount of light they receive.

Variegated violets react differently when they receive too much light. Their foliage may turn solid green, much as the foliage of some types of variegated violets (those with Tommie Lou type variegation notably) turn green during the heat of summer. Once again, supplying fewer hours of light, putting them at the sides or at the ends of the tubes, or setting the tubes further from the plants will allow them to return to their variegated form.

Changing the Tubes

After the first few months, tubes burn at about ten percent less than their original brightness, and after about eight months, the lights are burning at about three quarters of their original intensity. They will, however, stay at this same intensity for much of the rest of their useful life of about two years. That is why, if you grow show plants, it is advisable to replace one of the tubes in each two-tube light fixture at the end of the first year, then the other tube at the end of the second year, continuing to alternate in that way each year at the same time. That way, your plants will be getting about the same light intensity at all times. In order not to forget which tube should be changed, it is always wise to write the date on each new tube, using a blue or black marker.

For those growers who grow for pleasure only, you can wait much longer before changing tubes. When a large black

ring appears on the ends of the tube, it is close to the end of its life and should be replaced. You can even wait until the tube burns out entirely. Remember, though, that when one tube gives up the ghost, both tubes will go out, since the basis of fluorescent operation is that electricity flows from one tube into the next. If the circuit is broken by one tube burning out, even the good one will stop glowing. Some growers mistakenly change both tubes at this point, which could give your plants a case of "sunburn" due to the suddenness of the increased light intensity. One should only change the burnt tube. If you're not sure which one to replace, remove one tube and insert the new one. If the lamp doesn't come back on immediately, you'll know it was the other tube that needed replacing.

When you see Cool White tubes on sale, don't hesitate to stock up. Hardware stores often offer them at bargain prices. Likewise, plant tubes are sometimes offered on sale and should be purchased without hesitation, even if that means picking up several years supply, as they can otherwise be very expensive. Fluorescent tubes can be stored for decades without losing their quality. At the current times, prices seem to be going down for Warm White tubes, so you may want to stock up on those as well.

When using a new light for the first time, it is recommended to leave it on for only one hour because each tube is very intense at first and could do damage to the plants if left on for a full day. The next day it may be used for a full twelve hours or so. This might be called "breaking in" or conditioning.

A Question of Day-Length

Usually African violets require between 12 to 17 hours of artificial light per day (reference: Edward Bradford, *African Violet Magazine*, January 1990) for good growth and flowering. Anything more than that is just wasted energy, as the leaves have reached their saturation point after about 17 hours of continuous illumination. At any rate, although plants don't really "sleep" at night, other essential processes in plant growth do take place during the dark part of the daily cycle. That is why it is not a good idea to give a plant 24 hours of light a day.

Most growers never use a full 17 hours of light on their saintpaulias, though, as the last hour of light gives little in the way of improvement in growth or flowering. Before shows, when a maximum number of blooms is desired, many people set their timers on 16-hour days. During the rest of the year, the lights are usually turned on 12 hours a day.

When you're out of town and want to slow down your plant's growth so they won't require as much water, you can turn your lights down to 9 or even 8 hours a day. African violets are even capable of blooming under such short days, although not very heavily. This shows that saintpaulias are "day neutral plants", as opposed to many plants which are "long day plants". They require nights of less than 12 hours in order to bloom or "short day plants" which require night of more than 12 hours in order to bloom.

Temperature and Light

Fluorescent lights generate far less heat than any other light source but do give off some. Generally speaking, they are not hot enough to cause much of a problem in temperate climates - even less so when, as is so often the case, plants are grown in already cool basements.

But growers in warm climates often have a great deal of trouble with excess heat, especially during the summer months. This can easily be cured by reducing the number of hours of artificial light to 6-8 per day. Some have even gone further and turn their light gardens on only at night when the air is cooler. Small fans can also be used to reduce heat and provide air circulation. These should not be directed at the plants but just be set up to maintain good air movement. Fans not only reduce heat but, since they increase air circulation, they reduce excess humidity, essential when plants are being grown in humid basements. Some growers in hot climates use air conditioning and say that this in no way harms their plants.

Many growers use a timer in order that the light garden go off and on at specific hours of the day or night. It is true that timers are useful in growing healthy, floriferous plants, but they present one big problem. The ones I have been able to find, other than the heavy-duty timers designed for outdoor use, have only two-holed female plugs, yet fluorescent lights and light gardens require three-pronged (grounded) male plugs. If used without grounding, the metal of the fluorescent fixture in conjunction with water in the trays can give the grower a minor but annoying shock. I know this from experience. Why can't companies produce timers adapted to three pronged plugs? If anyone knows of a company which manufactures one, please inform us so that all growers may have this information. Note that a two-pronged grounding adaptor can be attached.

Cost of Operating a Light Garden

What are the electrical costs of running fluorescent lights? Expenses vary widely depending on the cost of electricity where you live. A recent article in *African Violet Magazine*, May-June, 2002, ("How Much Does Your Plant Hobby Cost?" By Allison Bringham and David Jepsen) states: the cost of one shop light for one year is \$24.88. This depends on the cost of electricity in your locality, of course.

Conclusion

Maintaining African violets under lights makes them much easier to grow, but they still need a great deal of attention. This includes repotting two or three times a year, proper watering, fertilizer added to each watering, foliar feeding (spraying with warm fertilized water), and turning plants so they receive even light on all sides. Just combine the basics of *Saintpaulia* culture with the advantage of light gardening, and you'll have blooming violets all year long!

Good growing!

Growing African Violets - Then & Now

by Gail Rankin
Edmonton, AB, Canada

In the late 1970's, several African violet enthusiasts decided to start an African violet club in Edmonton. As many were interested in the other gesneriad family members, we called it the Edmonton Gesneriad Society. During that time, I grew beautiful plants with absolutely no problem except for one cold winter when my basement was a bit too chilly. The plants sulked but did not die, and when the warmer weather returned, their health and vigor improved.

I quit growing in the mid 1980s due to personal changes (caregiver to ailing parents), and I was unable to keep up with my hobby. My love and interest in this wonderful plant family never went away. During the 1990's, I renewed my association with the club now called the Edmonton African Violet Society, met some wonderful new African violet enthusiasts, and started growing again. I had great success with episcias and streps but couldn't grow African violets. Their older leaves would wilt, they would quit blooming, and the plants looked so terrible I threw them out.

Why? I certainly knew how to grow them! I have several light set ups, and I teach a course on light gardening with Metro Community College. Most of my working life has been spent as a horticulture diagnostician with Alberta Agriculture and the City of Edmonton, Muttart Conservatory, and as a Sessional Lecturer at the University of Alberta. Now I am a private horticultural consultant. With this background, surely I could solve my own problem.

Finding the time to solve the problem was the biggest issue. Finally, I decided something must be done. I spent hours perusing leaves, flowers, and roots under the microscope, and read volumes of information. My diagnosis - first I found soil mealybugs, an insect I had refused to believe existed. Sure I knew about the foliar mealies and knew that they also went into the soil. I could find no scientific information on the soil mealybugs. With some searching and descriptions, I dissected soil balls and found these critters. They were a lot smaller than the grains of rice mentioned in literature, and I needed my 10 X magnifying glass to see them. I was then able to relate the pile of white stuff in the saucer to the insect. What to do? I found that they were pretty much throughout my entire collection so I embarked on a propagation program and tossed out the old plants. I pasteur-

ized my soilless mixes in the oven (200 degrees F for 45 minutes), bleached pots, and kept my potting area as clean as the plant pathology labs I had worked in. After several months, I was confident they were gone.

Still there were problems with the African violets. Next diagnosis - cyclamen or Tarsonemid mites! No wonder some people give up growing these plants. I had remembered reading an article by Dale Martens on how to handle plant material purchased at shows. She used soapy bleach water to treat each leaf before propagation. Then I recalled how we treat plant material we are using for tissue culture. There we submerge a piece of plant tissue in 10 % bleach solution and soak for 10-15 minutes, agitating every 2-3 minutes. The tissue is then rinsed in sterile distilled water and inoculated onto a growing medium. Essentially this is what Dale recommended. Adding a bit of soap or liquid detergent (surfactants) breaks the surface tension of water and gets the bleach into all the nooks and crannies of the leaf or stem surface.

I took cuttings of the plants, showing the tight centers and anything that looked the slightest bit abnormal. I isolated everything else. I used the bleach method before propagating leaves and crowns. Finally, a year later, I have a clean collection. Now I'm very careful (some would say paranoid) about bringing in new plants. I don't feel that the six weeks isolation is long enough, and some stay in isolation for a year. I have seen foliar mealybugs show up nine months after introduction to a house.

Where did all these pests come from? Like all pests that are tropical or subtropical in nature, we buy them. I had ordered leaves from all the major Canadian suppliers and even our club. I confess to even buying plants from the grocery store. I couldn't pinpoint the exact place they came from. We all know the saying "Buyer Beware." Somehow we feel that African violets should be exempt. Well, they aren't. It does no good to point fingers - just be very careful about bringing new plants into your collection. For the plant people who have been growing for years, my ramblings will not be new, but if I can help the new growers from having the same problems I had, I will be happy.

From *Chatter*, publication of the AVS of Canada



AVSA Affiliates

Bev Promersberger - *Affiliate Chairman*

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Planning Programs, Part II

General planning suggestions continued:

7. **Plan the year's programs before the year begins.** This is the best way to have a good assortment of topics. Alert your members to put those important dates on their calendars.
8. **Involve as many members as possible** to give or be a part of program presentations. It's a good way to get those less-regular members involved again. Maybe they aren't speakers and don't want to give a program; but, a main speaker can often use help, especially with a "hands on" type of program. Invite judges to judge a mini-show, showing members what the judges look for in a show plant.
9. **"Hands-on" programs involve the whole membership.** Experienced members can be involved helping new growers. These types of programs work well with many program topics: design, potting, propagation, grooming, etc.
10. **Keep the programs light, informative, and brief.** Try to inject humor or personal experiences when possible.
11. **Have an "easy start" policy** so that you don't lose new members with programs that are too technical.
12. **Remember that the Program chairman does not have to do all the work.** The chairman may appoint a co-chairman or committee. The executive committee can decide the program topics with the program chairman making the arrangements.

Types of programs

1. **Dawg Show.** In case this term is new to you, a "dawg" show is one in which the worst exhibits are rewarded. They can be anything from the plant with the longest neck, the most suckers, the worst in show, etc. Several articles have been written in the AVM over the years. One of the newest and best is an article written by Barbara Pershing in the May/June 2000 AVM, on page 20. The exhibits in these shows can be used to demonstrate what can and should be done to improve them. It can be a fun meeting and an informative one at the same time.
2. **Christmas party.** This is a very common replacement program for the December meeting. Some clubs meet at a local restaurant, or choose a local clubhouse for a potluck luncheon or dinner. **Fun Gift Exchange.** This is often a

fun way to exchange Christmas gifts. Each member brings in a gift. After each person is given a number, the person with the first (or last) number selects a gift. The next person can select from the remaining gifts or claim the one that was already chosen. The rules can determine if the gift should be opened or unopened before each person proceeds. The selection continues until the last person has chosen, each one having the option of selecting from the remaining gifts or claiming one that has already been chosen.

3. **Exchange program.** Clubs can exchange programs in more than one way. A speaker or panel of speakers could present a program for another club.
4. **Leaf Bingo.** This can be done with many variations. Members can be asked to bring duplicate starter plants, leaves of their favorite plants, or both. An old Bingo game can be used. Or, a member can make new cards and paste pictures of violets from catalogs in the center square usually reserved for "FREE". Replace "Bingo" with "Violet". Dry beans can be provided. Pennies work better because they don't move around so easily. The shorter bingo games (across, down, four corners, etc.) are usually best because there are more winners in a shorter time. The winners select a leaf or starter plant from those donated by members. You can start over each time a winner is called or continue on, depending on the time available and number of members in attendance. The leaves can be selected as with the Fun Gift Exchange. A winner could select a leaf from the collection of remaining leaves or take one from a former winner. Consider a blooming plant for the last "cover the card" winner. Leaf Bingo is a good Christmas program.

Read the conclusion to this series on planning programs in the September/October 2003 AVM. For a copy of the five-page listing of program topics from the DC Convention Affiliate meeting, send a SASE to the mailing address above. Many clubs elect and install officers at this time of year. Send the name and address of the new President to the AVSA Office for inclusion in the Affiliate Club listing in the September/October AVM. It's never too early to send the information. **Be sure that your dues are current. Deadline July 1, 2003.**

A Family Portrait



Georgene Albrecht
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Saintpaulia 'Buckeye Innocence'

Fall of 2002 was the last speaking engagement on my calendar. Pat Handcock had asked me to speak about floral design to her club in Dayton, Ohio. I received a panic call at work the day before telling me that there was an error about the date and the program was tonight, about four hours from now. I flew home, packed, and headed for the airport.

Of course, my wire cutters, paddle wire, hyacinth sticks, and needle holders were confiscated by security. I ran to the first flight to Dayton, got the last seat, but the plane was delayed. It was 6:00 P.M., and I was to be in Dayton by 7:30. Finally, we took off. Pat met me, and we headed for Fox Botanical which she informed me was under construction. She brought a flashlight because we had to walk in the dark over 100 yards of floating wood walkway. We were just a little late, and there were many people amazed that I had arrived.

Pat couldn't introduce me because her bridgework fell out. I laughed 'til I cried. She is a saint-in-the-making. She kept me overnight and drove me to Cincinnati the next morning. Her plant room is fantastic; her hybrids, breathtaking. So, our feature plant is *Saintpaulia* 'Buckeye Innocence'. It is well-named. Blooms are snow-white with a wide band of the palest pink on every petal, and every leaf has a delicate edge of variegation. This plant was purchased at the Washington convention and is now thirteen-inches wide.

I don't grow many standards, so they must be special to stay in my collection. I also love *S.* 'Buckeye Enchantment' with fantasy flowers.

Pat, keep on producing these beauties. My violets are grown in a basic Cornell mix, and I rotate three or four common fertilizers. This year I am going to try adding water polymer crystals to the potting soil to see if it makes a difference. I have always hesitated to use these because violets need a great deal of air in their soil. If the polymers grab too

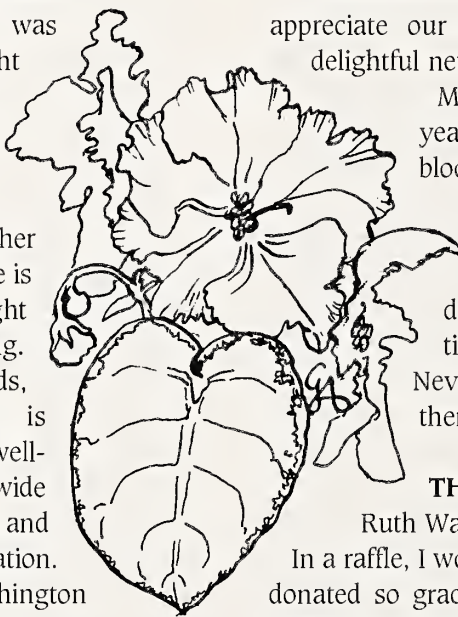
much water, air will be limited. If any of you have done this, would you write or email me with the results? Thanks. Sharing ideas helps us all.

SOMETHING NEW

Growing new plants and watching them bloom is so uplifting. The temperature outside is minus five degrees as I write this, but in my plant room there are new African violet plants about to bloom. They came from leaves purchased at convention. I can't wait.

Gesneriads are such fun because they are so diverse. We appreciate our commercial growers who provide these delightful new challenges.

Maybe I am exceptionally adventurous, but year after year I look for that new and unusual bloom or plant. It makes me feel better when I bring a new plant home and toss an older one that has been struggling. When my plants are happy, I am happy. If a plant does not please you, take a cutting just one time, and if it doesn't do well, out it goes. Never waste space on so-so varieties when there are new and exciting things out there.



THE SWEATER

Ruth Warren always did good things for our Society. In a raffle, I won a beautiful handknitted, blue sweater she donated so graciously. She took me to the beach when I visited her, and while there we were treated to the most beautiful sunset either of us had ever seen. She, her husband, and the New England chapters created some great memories for our society. I will never forget the Boston convention about 1990. The friendships, the fabulous show, and the wonderful food served in classic elegance could not have been better. We will miss her very much. She always made fine things happen with good humor and great class. How appropriate it was to honor her at the Washington convention!

PEN TIPS

Old-fashioned as it may be, my labels are placed in each pot. Permanent markers have a hard life on my potting table. They get wet and dirty with soil while potting. It is tiresome tak-

ing the caps on and off a dozen times an hour. So, I took a block of florists' foam for dry use and inserted the pen caps in it. Now, it is so easy to insert the pens in their caps. They are tightened when potting is finished. Labels are impaled in the foam, too.

Additional 2003 Convention Awards

Awards listed were received between November 15, 2002 and February 15, 2003

Commercial Horticulture

Sylvia Singh (CA) - \$50

Specified Awards - Amateur Division

Best Fantasy - \$25 in memory of

Amy Sue Leasure - daughter of Cece

Gaston - Desert Sun AVS (AZ)

Best Red Standard - \$25 in memory of

Mark Meadows - son of Beth

Meadows - Desert Sun AVS (AZ)

Best Other Gesneriad - \$25 - Northern

Illinois Gesneriad Society (IL)

Best Vintage Violet - \$30 - Richard Follett

and the Shenandoah Saintpaulia

Society (VA)

2nd Best Vintage Violet - \$20 - Richard

Follett and the Saintpaulia Society (VA)

Design Division

Best Interpretive Flower Arrangement -

\$10 - John & Carol Callaghan (DE)

Best Underwater Arrangement - \$20 -

Kitty Hedgepeth (VA)

2nd Best Design in Show - \$25 in

memory of Denzel "Dee" Probert -

Tustana AVS (CA)

\$25 - First AVS of Spartanburg (SC)

Undesignated and Amateur Horticulture

\$100 donated by:

Ohio State AVS (OH)

William Sugg (TX)

\$50 donated by:

Lincoln AVS (NE)

Tampa AVS (FL)

\$30 donated by:

Carol & Jim Allegretti (IL)

\$25 donated by:

Ruth Bann (MN)

Capital City AVS (CA)

Carlsbad AVS (CA)

Karyn Cichocki (NJ) - in memory of

Laura Shannon

Columbus AVS (OH)

First AVS of Denton (TX)

First Lakeland AVS (FL)

First AVS of Spartanburg (SC)

Heart of Jacksonville (FL)

Hoosier AVS (IN)

Jo's Violets - Joanne Schrimsher (TX)

NASA Area AVS (TX)

Dr. William E.H. Price (B.C. Canada)

Edna Rourke (CT)

Tucson AVS (AZ) - in memory of

Don Ness

Upper Pinellas AVS (FL)

Victoria AVC (TX)

Mary Walbrick (TX)

Wichita AV Study Club (KS)

Windy City Violets (IL)

Wisconsin Council of AV Judges (WI)

\$20 donated by:

AVS of Philadelphia (PA) - in memory of

Laura Shannon

Delaware AVS (DE)

Inner City AVC (MO) - in memory of

Earl Jackson

Nelly Levine (CO)

\$15 donated by:

Central Florida AVS (FL)

Sharon Long (VA)

Anne & Richard Nicholas (TX)

Tara AVC (GA)

\$10 donated by:

Crosstown AVC of Madison (WI)

Paul F. Kroll (NY) - in memory of

Annabelle Hart

Paul F. Kroll (NY) - in memory of

Ruth Meek - Ventura County AVS (CA)

Add \$5 to the Commercial Showcase

Award contributed by AV International,

the Internet group. Award total: \$80 -

in memory of Nancy Blanton.

HATS OFF TO THE WINNERS

The results of the membership contest from the Membership and Promotion Committee are in! We did not realize our dream of more than ten winners, but we did have a group of dedicated and ambitious members working to obtain new members for AVSA.

We had only one individual securing the required ten or more new members. Chris Leppard of Oxford, Michigan has been actively working with a new group of enthusiastic violet-teers in her area, and her hard work has paid off. She was awarded a one year membership and a beautiful wooden tray with handpainted African violets on ceramic tiles, donated by Nancy Hayes.

Though three clubs were very close, the top winner was the African Violet Society of Pensacola, Florida with twenty-five new AVSA members. Along with a complimentary affiliate

membership for the coming year, they will also receive a \$50.00 check from Nancy and John Hayes for securing the highest number of new members.

The African Violet Society of Minnesota had their hard work rewarded with twenty-two new AVSA members, and the Metropolitan St. Louis AV Council came in with seventeen. Both clubs will also receive a complimentary one year affiliate membership.

In future issues, we will highlight these winners and let you know how they went about convincing people that membership in AVSA is a prize in itself! Thanks to all who have worked tirelessly; we need you ALL to help in "growing" our Society.

Nancy G. Hayes

AVSA Membership and Promotion Committee

Thinking Small



Pat Richards

15105 S. Seminole Drive

Olathe, KS 66062-3004

email: Patter257@aol.com

As I write this, there is snow on the ground, with more forecast to fall. The Louisiana "Lagniappe" is a just two months away. When you read this though, the grass in the central United States will have turned green, the daffodils, tulips, and forsythia will have finished blooming, and convention will have concluded. How time flies! It is with this sense of renewal and rebirth this column is being written.

MULTIPLYING MINIS

Perhaps you need some extras to give away to friends. Maybe you'd like to sell some. You might even want to ensure you'll have a continuous supply of your favorites coming along. It may even be as simple as you enjoy watching the cycle of life, from leaf, to plantlet, to small blooming plant, and finally, to a mature, well-grown plant. These are a few of the many reasons to propagate your minis. How do you go about doing it?

Many years ago, when I began growing violets, the leaves were placed in water. My great-aunt used small jelly or baby food jars covered with tin foil to start them. A hole would be poked in the foil and the leaf petiole inserted to the leaf blade, as the leaf would rot if the blade were in contact with the water. These jars were placed in the windowsill, where they would be watched until the leaves produced "just enough" roots. The leaves would then be planted in soil, hopefully before any plantlets began appearing. Today, this transitional "visual" aspect of the process is put aside, and instead we root our leaves directly in planting medium.

A HOME FOR THE FUTURE

Where should leaves be placed for propagation? Some growers place them right back in the pot with the primary plant so they know exactly which plant is growing where. Plantlets are removed as soon as possible so as not to destroy the main plant's symmetry. While I don't recommend the practice, it can work for diligent, conscientious growers (and I would suggest this only be done with very young plants). A

second method is to place them among the plants in the primary collection. The leaves can be grown in pots among the plants, or perhaps they can have a space in the growing area all by themselves. If the leaves are separated from the growing plant, they need to be carefully labeled. Small plant stakes can be used (and can also serve as small props for the leaves). Frugal growers can use popsicle sticks, recycled plastic cutlery, etc. to the same end (be careful with popsicle sticks as they will break down in the soil eventually). Names should be written on the stakes using a permanent marker or horticultural pencils. If you're using a disposable pot (such as a solo cup or a styrofoam cup), an alternative is to write the name of the plant directly on the cup. A small plastic bag may be placed over the cup to encourage faster growth by increasing the warmth and humidity within the container. The method I like to use is to take a small, clear, plastic container with an attached lid, such as can be found in bakeries and salad bars. Fill the bottom half with moist planting medium, insert the leaves, and using a permanent marker, write the name of each plant on the top of the container directly above the leaf. Close it up, put it under the lights, and forget it for 4-6 weeks, at which time plantlets will be coming up. For the small size of mini and semi leaves, this method is perfect.

MULTIPLYING MEDIUM

Many growers like to use a half perlite/half vermiculite medium for starting their leaves. This is a very lightweight medium, conducive to the fine roots the leaves and plantlets will be putting out. I like to use my regular potting soil (either a 1-1-1 peat/perlite/vermiculite mix or half Pro-Mix BX/half perlite mix) to start the leaves, as it is almost as light, and has more nutrients and nutrient converting ability than the perlite/vermiculite formulation. It's okay to water with plain water or a weak fertilizer solution at this point, but as the plantlets mature, converting to your regular fertilizer/water is a good idea.

Once you have your method of propagation identified, it's time to put down the leaves. First, selection of plant material is important. You can use the older, outermost leaves, as these are the most obvious candidates for removal. Be careful not to select any which are limp, soft, or show signs of weakness or collapse. Damaged leaves, particularly those which have healed over, are okay to use as long as there is a good portion of the leaf blade remaining. Be careful to examine the leaf petiole. The lower ones often are scarred or injured from the pot rim and fertilizer salts which accumulate. Again, any softness or weakness indicates a leaf which should be passed over. Ideally, a leaf from the middle tier of rows of leaves would be selected. These leaves are mature enough to produce fine plantlets, but young enough to have escaped damage and weakness. Essentially, they are "in their prime". Removing one or two would temporarily affect the symmetry of the plant, but as quickly as minis and semis grow, the gap would quickly be filled in and taken care of by the next repotting.

Once the leaf has been selected, remove it from the plant. A lower leaf can be moved side to side and be snapped out of place. A leaf in the middle tier is different and more caution should be taken. It too, can be moved side to side and snapped, or a knife can be used to remove the leaf. Cut it longer (closer to the main stem) than you finally want it. Remnants of leaf stubs should be removed using a knife or pencil point, but be very careful not to injure adjoining leaves or the main stem. Before placing the leaf in the planting medium re-cut the petiole at an angle, broad area facing toward the front of the leaf. This is to enable the plantlets to come up to the front of the leaf instead of behind it.

Depending on temperature, light, and humidity (warmer, more and higher, respectively, lead to faster results), you should have plantlets coming up within 4-6 weeks, and in another few weeks, your plantlets should be ready for transplanting.

SEPARATION ANXIETY

Once the blades of your plantlet's leaves have reached

dime size, or the size of your pinkie fingernail, it's time to separate the "mother" from the "baby". The only hesitation should be if its' color is yellow-ish or variegated showing little or no signs of green, at which point waiting until the plantlet greens up to a healthier shade would be in order.

It is not wise to re-plant the "mother" leaf. They generally don't reproduce as well, and only encourage the formation of various pathogens which should not be introduced to your collection. Keeping this in mind, you can either use a knife or your fingers to separate the plantlet from the leaf. I prefer to use my fingers by gently uprooting the leaf and roots from the planting medium. At this point you can visually see the different plantlets and separate accordingly, being careful to disturb the roots as little as possible. If you care to use a knife, try to ensure each plantlet has enough roots to support it. Sometimes their cells are reproducing so rapidly that with careful transplanting they will survive very nicely despite having little to "grow" on.

Have your individual planting pots ready for these little plantlets by filling them with your regular moistened potting soil and drilling a hole in the medium with your finger. Some people slightly fill the hole with moistened vermiculite to further ease the transition, but this practice isn't necessary for success. Make sure your plantlet is centered in the pot. Getting them off to a good start, square in the pot, ensures a symmetrical, mature plant. You can water the plantlets in to make sure the roots have contact with the soil, but this isn't necessary. It's also a nice idea to water with a mild solution of plant starter fertilizer (high in B-6) to encourage strong root growth, but again, it's not necessary. The greatest precaution is to not overwater as it will take a while for the roots to adapt.

At this point, you can sit back and watch the fun as these little miracles of life take off right before your eyes!

COMING UP

Next time, we'll recap the beauties of the bayou, as the winners and outstanding entries of AVSA's Louisiana convention are reviewed. Until then, good growing to you!



DISBUDDING

by Joan Halford

From her book *"Growing African Violets in South Africa"*

You do want to be able to grow plants that give you a mass of bloom, don't you? Disbudding gives you maximum bloom and tremendous growth in the developing foliage.

Disbudding is a must if you want to produce a head of a hundred to two hundred blooms. The potential is there; it is up to you, the grower.

You have to work at it. It is a never-ending process. There are no secrets to disbudding. Take a calendar and mark the date you want to have your plants in full bloom. Count back seven to eight weeks from this date. This is purely a guide, since a lot will depend on (a) the variety, and (b) the weather. Hot weather will bring your plants into early bloom; cold weather will retard the buds opening.

With the date fixed seven weeks prior to the event you have chosen, *you must then disbud all the time, non-stop, up to that date!* Take off all the buds as they appear, and when that date (seven weeks prior to your event) arrives, stop disbudding, leave the buds on, and in six to seven weeks' time you should have a mass of bloom, in time for the event you have planned.

For show purposes, I disbud for nine months prior to show date! One might think that this is overdoing it, but during this time of disbudding, the plants will grow much faster without blossoms. One can also watch out for better symmetry and the removal of suckers. When disbudding, leave a scant 8" of the bloom stalk on the main stem, which will encourage another bloom stalk, if not two, to emerge from the same spot. It must be remembered, however, that buds only appear in the top few rows of leaves, not low down, so watch out. Before you know it, a big, fat bud has appeared and is taking strength from your plant that you are wanting to grow to develop the foliage.

With miniatures, semi-miniatures, and trailers, opinions differ as to whether one should disbud. When routinely grooming these types, I have always disbudded, allowing up to ten weeks for trailers to come into full bloom. It is usually found that a spell of blooming will come about ten weeks after repotting. Here again, varieties differ.

More good effects will be obtained, rather than bad, from trying disbudding over so long a period. You can stretch this to eighteen months, if you want to, holding back the plant until the foliage is full and well balanced; it is a matter of choice. Is the foliage flat and symmetrical? Is the plant ready to produce a big head of bloom?

Not all varieties are right for disbudding. Only start your disbudding program when your young plant has finished its first blooming. You can check that it is growing true to its vari-

ety. Move your small plant, which should be in the smallest pot of 3" into the next size pot if the diameter of the plant is at least 8", and then start your disbudding program. You will be totally surprised at how fast the leaves grow. Use your calendar for this. Let one bloom stalk appear, and let it open fully, taking note of the number of days that it took to do this. You can then work out its progress and enjoy the blooms at the same time. Now you will know exactly how long this took. No need to have no flowers at all to enjoy!

You might find suckering a problem. Small suckers will appear on the main stem, and they must be removed. They will even appear out of the soil, as well as the axils of the leaves. Take them off; dig them out as they appear. Your plants are wanting to grow so much, that is why they are sending out suckers - this shows you the amount of energy that blooming consumes. If you do not repot during this period, you will find that your plant will put out a row of smaller leaves, smaller than normal. Remove the plant from the pot, and if the root-ball is full of roots, then pot up to the next sized pot.

If you are growing under fluorescent lights, you should plan to increase the length of time the lights are burning by about 15 minutes each week, until a maximum of 16 hours per day is reached. Watch out for bleaching of leaves with this amount of light.

If you are eventually successful and if you have recorded dates, you will get a larger than normal head of bloom. Enjoy this spectacle of nature. However, the African violet does seem to deteriorate when a massive hundred to two hundred blossoms are left on for too long a period. The crown leaves become squashed and creased. It will then take about two months, if not longer, for them to recover and also for the plants to return to their normal cycle of blooming.

When plants are very large, it is far better to strip off the outer row of leaves and repot down to a smaller pot and let it grow out again. A smaller, more perfect plant is far better than a large, imperfect plant! When you stop disbudding and the blossoms appear and open, watch the leaves. Plants that changed, became darker or brighter, will return to normal when disbudding is stopped.

Get a calendar, get organized, and try disbudding with a few plants that you know bloom well. If you follow these very simple instructions, you will be amazed at the difference disbudding will make, since you will get excellent heads of bloom. We prune our trees to improve the quality of the fruit or blossom, so why not our African violets? It is for the same reason.





What's Missing From This Picture?

Chances are, few of today's garden centers know as much about growing African Violets as you do. No doubt, this explains why so many knowledgeable Violet growers have a hard time finding the products they need. For anyone who knows what it takes to grow beautiful, full-blooming African Violets, it can be like putting together a puzzle, only to find there's a piece missing. We know the feeling. That's why we started the Selective Gardener, a plant care supplier that specializes in products for African Violets.

Everything You Need to Grow Beautiful, Full-Blooming African Violets

The Selective Gardener makes it easy to get the products you need. As a plant care supplier that specializes in African Violets, the Selective Gardener carries a full line of plant care products with brand names like Optimara.

- Fully-dissolving, urea-free fertilizers
- Self-watering devices such as the Watermaid and the new, spill-proof Optimara WaterShip
- Ultralight, pH-balanced potting media
- Pots, trays and plant covers
- Show accessories and more

From Leaf Cuttings to Finished Violets

In addition to plant care products, the Selective Gardener offers African Violets in several pot sizes, including genuine Miniatures. You can also order leaf cuttings from all of the available Optimara and Rhapsodie varieties.

A Complete African Violet Resource

The Selective Gardener is a complete African Violet resource. Send for the Selective Gardener catalog, and you will find offers for plant care products, Violets and leaf cuttings, even books and posters. Or go online, and you will find even more. At the Selective Gardener's internet site (<http://www.selectivegardener.com>), you will have access to a number of resources not available anywhere else.

- Growing tips from the world famous Holtkamp Greenhouses
- Complete interactive Violet identification guide
- Links to other useful sites such as Doctor Optimara, a symptom-based, interactive guide for diagnosing pests and pathogens
- Reviews of African Violet products

(Tip: If you do not have access to the internet, try your public library. Many libraries, now, provide computers for public use, as well as helpful assistance for anyone wanting to go online.)

The Selective Gardener Catalog

To receive the Selective Gardener catalog, send \$1 (which will be credited to your first order) with your name and address to:

The Selective Gardener
6011 Martingale Lane
Brentwood, TN 37027

Or visit us online at
<http://www.selectivegardener.com>.



DATES' WASPS

by Jimmy Dates
Hybridizer of "Wasp" Blooms

(Editor's Note: Due to the rising interest in Jimmy Dates' 'Wasp' violets, this article, which first appeared in the July/August 1987 AVM, is being reprinted. This is part of the workshop given by Mr. Dates at the 1986 AVSA Convention in Orlando, FL.)

My hybridizing work with African violets has resulted in the introduction of 60 varieties, 15 of which are registered. I first attempted hybridizing during my last year (1954) at the University of Illinois where I received a BS in Floriculture. I was working on a project involving the effect of water temperature on the growth of African violets. In 1957 I acquired a plant called 'Bustles' from a Mrs. Hotchkiss of Peoria, Illinois. It was a sport that showed up in a pan of leaves she had set of 'Purple Prince.' The leaves were compound, that is the main blade had another smaller leaf blade or sometimes blades on the back side. The flowers were purple, the petals fluted and thread like. I could immediately see the potential for some very interesting hybrids. My first registered introduction was 'Pink Wasp' in 1964. A picture of this was published in Peggie Schulz's book *Gesneriads and How to Grow Them*, published by Diversity Books (Elvin McDonald publisher) in 1967. The original flowers were small, and I increased the size through hybridizing. All flowers that have this characteristic are now identified as wasp-type because of my first introduction, 'Pink Wasp.' The foliage is identified as compound.

The following is a list of registered varieties with wasp-type bloom and compound leaves:

- 'Pink Wasp' - 1964
- 'Sputnik' - 1964
- 'Nymph Fly' - 1968
- 'Hoodwink' - 1968
- 'Royal Mountbattan' - 1969
- 'Burgundy Wasp' - 1969
- 'Calico Wasp' - 1969
- 'Kaneland Beauty' - 1969

However, not all of my introductions were of the wasp flower and compound leaf type. The following is a list of registered varieties with regular type blooms and leaves.

- 'Wildwing' - 1968
- 'Sabrina' - 1968 (this, as far as I know is no more)
- 'Nancy Ann' - 1969
- 'First Recital' - 1969
- 'Evagene' - 1969
- 'Pink Prolifity' - 1969
- 'Bonnice' - 1971

A number of hybrids were released by my mother. She thought they were all wonderful, but some of them I would rather have tried to improve. I will probably register *Acolian Wasp*, *Blue Tail Fly*, *Cool Hand Pink*, *Knight Light Wasp*, *Lady Mountbattan*, *Lithe Lassie*, *Loverly Wasp*, *Pink Fly*, *Pink Nosegay*, *Royal Wasp* and *San Francisco Wasp*.

I have been asked many times which of my hybrids is my

favorite. I don't know that there is just one that is my favorite over all the rest. I am partial to *Knight Light Wasp*, *Lithe Lassie*, *Nymph Fly*, *Pink Fly*, *Pink Wasp*, *Royal Wasp* and *San Francisco Wasp*.

I have done most of the hybridizing, and my family came up with most of the plant names. Since my family, at the time I was doing most of the hybridizing, was a large, noisy, wacky, wonderful tribe - three girls, one boy, three standard poodles, and two cats - we usually managed to coin some fascinating terms.

The Wasp series is so named because of the unusual shape of the bloom. We wanted a distinctive and yet significant name for the first plant in the series. The bloom reminded us of a pink insect - hence the name 'Pink Wasp,' 'Burgundy Wasp,' 'Fantasy Wasp,' 'Calico Wasp,' 'Royal Wasp,' 'Will-o-the-Wasp,' 'Aeolian Wasp,' 'Snow Wasp,' and 'Knight Light Wasp' followed. Variations on the theme are 'Nymph Fly,' 'Pink Fly,' 'Coral Spider,' all three of which are semiminiatures. Elaborating a bit, 'Burgundy Wasp' is a two-tone burgundy wasp bloom. 'Fantasy Wasp' and 'Calico Wasp' are fantasy "wasps." 'Royal Wasp' is a very large and regal blue-purple. 'Will-o-the-Wasp,' 'Aeolian Wasp' and 'Knight Light Wasp' are fun terms, based on word plays and family jokes. 'Knight Light Wasp' incorporates the name of the local high school's symbol, the Kaneland Knights. (Obviously, 'Kaneland Beauty' picks up the same idea, which at the time delighted my teenagers.) The two 'Fly' semiminiatures have small bloom. 'Coral Spider' has unique, long, narrow coral petals which resemble spider legs.

Double wasp blooms include 'Royal Mountbattan,' a blue-purple, and 'Lady Mountbattan,' a pink - both names which appealed to our sense of elegance late at night when we desperately had to come up with names for new releases. (Double wasp blooms are clusters of fluted petals.)

'Pink Cherubs' - a small semidouble cluster - reminds me of pink cherubs (but I am not quite sure why.)

'Wham Bang' - a double rose-red wasp - was my father's name for one of his hybrids, probably prompted by color and profusion of bloom.

Single wasp-bloom introductions which don't carry wasp names are 'Dates Fanfare,' blue blooms held high above the plant; 'Sputnik,' because it looks as if it were in orbit all the time with its very bustled or compound leaves; 'Hoodwink,' blue with white edge, reminiscent of a cross between a monk's hood and a merry wink; 'Lithe Lassie,' a delicate pink in great clusters; and 'Lunar Lily,' a pale pinkish white occasionally blooming a darker pink, and so named because of the moon shots and its ethereal "out of this world" appearance.

Another group of plants, produced through hybridizing "wasps" with "stars," resulted in blooms which are symmetrical like stars and deeply "lobed" like wasps. Plants in this group include 'Dates Jubilee,' a fringed white with pink shadings, named in honor of Mom and Dad Dates' 50th anniversary (1968); 'Kaneland Beauty,' mentioned above; 'Marian Star,' named for our small, wooded subdivision; 'Trail Charmer,' because our family enjoyed nature, hiking, etc.; 'Peppermint Frost,' a delicate peppermint pink; and 'Cool Hand Pink,' a takeoff on the movie "Cool Hand Luke," selected because the bloom looks like a five-fingered hand.

Standard type bloom hybrids include 'Dates Mystique,' suggested by the unusual coloring and dark strawberry foliage; 'Blue Owl,' whose dipped upper two petals prompted visions of a blue owl; 'First Recital,' a semiminiature, white edged orchid colored bloom, released about the time the older three performed in their first piano recital and - well, we're the nostalgic type; and 'Nancy Ann,' diminutive sounding name for a diminutive semiminiature plant. 'Intensified Pride' is an intense pink which demands attention - and prompted a paraphrase of a popular detergent commercial. 'Wildwing,' a dipped blue and white bloom like a winged bird, happily usurped the name of our first-born colt, a blythe and free little stallion. 'Wilderness Beauty,' a pink and white fused duo with dark pink eye, reflects our love of the outdoors and off-the-beaten path areas. 'Zuri' was named by the folks. It has Clackamus foliage and a mystique-colored bloom; Zuri was one of their cows on their farm in Florida when I was a baby.

'Pink Prolifty' is well-named. It is a tremendously prolific double pink. 'Evagene,' a double bright rose pink beauty, is named for a friend, Evagene Miller of Aurora, IL. 'Bonnice' named for another CJW on that Florida farm - is a very large semidouble pink. 'Tie-dyed' - a multicolored fringed double red with a wide white edge trimmed in green - reflected a current teenage interest in tie-dyeing.

This is the behind-the-scenes story of our whimsical method of naming. You should see the list of names for the "projected" and "rejected"!

The following is some background on my hybrids and the method I use to keep track of the crosses I make.

In 1957 everyone was into pink violets, so I started working to get a pink flowered bustle. I crossed 'Georgia Peach' X 'Bustle' and got a seedling 1-57-2 which I back crossed on to Georgia Peach.'

First an explanation of my hybridizing code. The first number designates the first seed planted of crosses harvested in that year. In other words 1-57 means of all the crosses harvested in 1957 this was the first seed pod planted. The second would be 2-57 and so on. The third number designates the sequential seedlings saved out of the cross. The resulting seedling was 160-9 which was named and registered December 1964, as 'Pink Wasp.'

Gold Dip X Bustles

Registered 12/64

Celery (5-61-2)

Hector X 2-58-23

(Spider X Bustles)

Lillian Lou (7-61-15)

3-54-5 X 2-58-5

3-54-5

(Sailor Girl X 1-52-6)

2-58-5 (Spider X Bustles)

1-52-6 (Blue Eyed Girl X

Neptune)

Royal Mountbattan

(1-63-3)

Heritage X Pink Wasp

Registered 7/69

Nymph Fly (4-64-2)

Saintpaulia velutina X 'Pink Wasp'

Registered 11/68

Pink Fly sport of

Nymph Fly

Aeolian Wasp (38-66-1)

15-65-2 X 1-64-2

15-65-2 (1-63-1 X Tidy)

1-63-1 (Heritage X Pink

Wasp)

1-64-2 (Pink Wasp X Vanity

Fair)

Black Friar (59-65-10)

2-63-2 X Nightengale

2-63-2

(Star Chimes X 2-58-5

2-58-5 (Spider X Bustles)

Pink Nosegay (39-6~8)

29-65-2 X Bunny

29-64-2 (2-63-2 X Red

Cavalier)

2-63-2

(Star Chimes X 2-58-5)

2-58-5 (Spider X Bustles)

Snow Wasp (39-66-6)

29-65-2 X Bunny

(same as above)

Burgundy Wasp (29-65-6)

2-63-2 X Red Cavalier

2-63-2

(Star Chimes X 2-58-5

2-58-5 (Spider X Bustles)

Registered 7/69

Coral Spider (29-65-14)

2-63-2 X Red Cavalier

(same as above)

Calico Wasp (16-65-7)

Star Burst X 2-62-1

2-62-1 (Ann Bly X 1-60-1)

1-60-1 (Georgia Peach

X 1-57-2)

1-57-2 (Georgia Peach X

Bustles)

Registered 7/69

Dates Jubilee (26-65-1)

Tidy X 2-62-1

2-62-1 (same as above)

Kaneland Beauty

(26-65-8)

Tidy X 2-62-1

(same as above)

Registered 7/69

Hood Wink (17-6~1)

Nut X 2-62-1

2-62-1 (same as above)

Registered 11/68

Knight Light Wasp

(37-66-5)

7-63-2 X Forever White

7-63-2

(2-58-5 X Peek-a-boo)

2-58-5 (Spider X Bustles)

Fire Wasp (4-68-5)

8-67-2 X 29-65 11

8-67-2

(11-65-11 X 5-63-1)

11-65-11 (Star Burst

X 1-63-3

1-63-3 (Royal Mountbattan)

5-63-1 (Royal Dip

X S. diplotricha)

2-63-2 (Star Chimes

X 2-58-5

2-58-5 (Spider X Bustles)

Pink Cherubs (11-65-9)

Star Burst X Royal

Mountbattan

Royal Wasp (11-65-6)

Star Burst X Royal

Mountbattan

Loverly Wasp a sport of

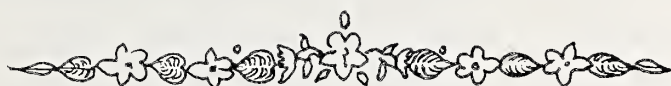
'Loverly' discovered by

Mrs. Tretter of St. Louis.

She gave it to me for

release.

Spoontnick (1-58-14)



Showcase

Tiny Wood Trail

Exhibited by: Alice D. Grundy

Hybridized by: T. Khoe

Miniature Trailer



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Apache Primrose

Exhibited by: Gertrud Schneider

Best Variegated African Violet

2002 AVS of Canada National Show

Hybridized by: J. Munk

Standard



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Concord

Exhibited by: Tony Hulleman

Hybridized by: Horikoshi/Ozaki

Standard

Why Won't My Violet Bloom?

by Joyce Stork

From the AVSA Web Site, Frequently Asked Questions

Most African violets should be blooming regularly throughout the year. Some varieties will always have one or two flowers open. Some varieties burst into heavier bloom and then rest briefly before bursting into bloom again. A few varieties are more reluctant to bloom except in excellent light, but even these should be blooming once or twice a year. If violets do not bloom, there is usually a problem with the growing conditions.

The Likely Culprit is Light

Violets need bright light to bloom well. If they are window grown, violets should be set within twelve inches of the glass; the window should be fairly large to allow generous light; there should be some light filtering, such as sheer drapes or trees outside. Do be careful of heat, however, since some window areas get quite warm. Temperatures should stay near 72°F. Violets that are not getting enough light will seem to reach upward. Leaves will not lie flat in a perfect circle around the pot. Whenever a grower sees this, efforts should be taken to increase the amount of light the plant receives.

Violets can be given artificial light when no good windows are available, using any kind of fluorescent tubes. Violets should be placed so that the light is just twelve inches above the foliage, and the lights should be turned on for about twelve hours a day. Again, choose a growing area that is about 72 degrees most of the time.

Is It Hungry for Fertilizer?

Often a lack of bloom can be blamed on inadequate fertilizer. Violets need to be fertilized weekly with a good quality fertilizer designed for them. There are many good products on the market. Most growers prefer to use a formula that is mixed in the water and used every time violets are watered. If you choose to use a fertilizer that recommends monthly fertilizing, you can dilute it to use weekly. If directions call for one teaspoon to a gallon of water monthly, simply change it to 1/4 teaspoon to a gallon. Fertilizer is quite stable when mixed up, and can be saved from week to week if it is not all used at once.

Potting Soil Can Prevent Blooms

Blossoms form when roots are healthy and well-developed. Violet roots are very fine and hair-like. If violets are potted in heavy or packed soils, the roots will not develop, and flowering will be sparse. It is hard to purchase good quality pre-mixed violet soil. Most products labeled for violets are using sedge peat which is black and smeary when rubbed between the fingers. Rarely do these commercial potting

mixes have enough ingredients to lighten the soil (such as perlite or vermiculite) for violets to thrive. For many growers, the only solution is to mix it themselves. One commonly used recipe is: 1 part milled sphagnum peat moss, 1 part vermiculite, and 1 part perlite with a bit of charcoal tossed in. The texture is most important. This mix will not pack down even when wet, leaving lots of air passages for roots to grow into. When repotting violets, be especially careful not to press down on the soil or pack it around the roots.

A Few Other Possibilities

Along with preferring the soil to be loose and airy, violets like to be in small pots. Generally, the pots should be four inches deep (or less) and only one-third the size of the leaf span. If your violet is twelve inches across, it should be growing in a pot that is four inches in diameter and four inches deep. When well-developed roots find the walls of their pot, they will often begin heavy flowering. Dry air can cause violet buds to dry off before ever becoming visible to the naked eye. Be sure that there is some humidity around the plant, and avoid drafts from heating or air conditioning. Humidity can be provided with a small open dish of water placed next to the pot. Uneven watering may cause buds to dry off prematurely. Try to keep soil evenly moist all of the time. Avoid allowing your violet to become so dry that leaves wilt, but also avoid allowing your plant to stand in water for more than one-half hour (to avert crown rot problems). Be sure that there is only one crown of leaves growing in the pot. Sometimes violets will form suckers, resulting in multiple crowns or centers of growth. These suckers should be removed into their own pot or destroyed, so that a single crown is left. Most violets do not bloom well when crowded in a pot.

A Silly Tip

Occasionally a grower is doing everything well, and a violet will still stubbornly remain out of bloom while developing beautiful leaves. Botanists would say that it is in a vegetative mode. In order to switch it to a fruiting (flowering) mode, the plant needs a gentle threat that will trigger a "survival of the species" response. Squeezing the sides of the pot or gently thumping the pot on the table surface will disturb roots enough to trigger a panic response, often causing the violet to begin setting flowers. It sounds silly, but there is good science to support this action.

Visit the AVSA Web Site.
www.avsa.org

SUCKERS (SIDE SHOOTS) ON AFRICAN VIOLETS

by Margaret Taylor

Suckers (or side shoots) that grow on African violets can be both a bane and a boon, according to where they occur.

Single crowned standards and miniatures are best kept that way - single crowned. Therefore, the earlier you can detect and remove side shoots, the better. If they are allowed to grow unchecked, the plants will soon become multi-crowned, which are congested and unattractive. Blooms will be sparse and symmetry gone forever.

Catch them *if* you can

Initially two little leaves may sprout from the plant at soil level. These are easy to remove as soon as they are noticed. When side shoots start to appear higher in the leaf axils, wait until it is certain that they are not the beginning of flower stems, which normally also start with two little leaves. If in doubt, wait a week or two to be sure. When two more leaves appear, it is certain that you are dealing with a side shoot.

How to do this?

Experienced growers may find it quite easy to pinch out side shoots with their fingers; however, several different implements may be used. These might be sucker-pluckers, tweezers, fine manicure scissors, dental instruments, etc.

It is sometimes quite a challenge to get a side shoot out in one piece as a tiny plantlet with no root system. To start such a plant is faster than leaf propagation and has a very good chance of being a replica of the parent. In fact, chimeras (pinwheels) are best reproduced this way. It is well known among African violet growers that some chimeras are disinclined to spontaneously sucker at all. The remedy? They must be beheaded! This involves cutting out the center crown of the original plant and putting it down as one would a side shoot. Use a light, moist growing medium, hold the sucker in place with toothpicks, and enclose in a plastic bag until roots develop. This will probably take about three weeks.

Hide the mother!

The poor beheaded plant will be a sorry sight indeed, and you will probably not want it on display. It can be moved to an out of the way place with moderate light, and very soon the center cut will heal and grow several suckers. When these

are cut and planted, sometimes a second batch will grow. The majority of these are likely to be clones of the parents, but as African violets can be contrary by nature, there is no guarantee this will be so.

What about trailers?

When starting a trailer, either with a plantlet, a leaf, or a cutting, wait until new growth has commenced and then encourage suckering by nipping out the center two leaves. You want at least three branches from the main stem for two reasons. The first is to fill the pot and the second is that it is a requirement in judging standards, should your plant be a show hopeful.

When the center has gone...

Sometimes, due to chemical injury, disease, or pests, a single crowned plant's center may be destroyed. In an attempt to repair its own injury, it is likely to send up multiple suckers. Even when one is removed, usually the result is a deformed, uneven growth pattern. It is quicker to take one healthy sucker and restart the variety, discarding the rest of the plant. You can save a leaf for "insurance" if you wish.

The Stress Factor

There are conditions which produce stress and may induce unwanted suckering. Sometimes, due to temperature extremes or grower intervention (disbudding), some plants seem to sucker heavily as if trying to save themselves. If growing for show, be extra vigilant in removing these, or your plant will quickly grow out of shape and lessen its chances of doing well on the show bench.

Some varieties will be nothing but a nuisance in insisting on growing numerous side shoots or extra crowns seemingly overnight. You must decide if the effort is really worth trying to tame these rebels.

Grooming African violets has several factors. Sorting out the sucker is just one of them!

Happy growing!

From *The African Violet*,
publication of the AV Association of Australia, Inc.



Showcase

Fortune Teller

Exhibited by: Paul Sorano

Hybridized by: Lyons



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Aca's Pink Pansy

Exhibited by: Lynn Moore

Hybridized by: J. Brownlie

Large



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

B-Man's Palma

Exhibited by: Dianne Good

Hybridized by: B. Curcuruto

Large

CAPILLARY MATTING

by Joan Halford

From her book *"Growing African Violets in South Africa"*

Watering by capillary matting is a very easy method, especially if one has several African violets and wants to group them in one place. The matting used must be a man-made fiber, such as thick orlon, fake fur, thick polyester, etc. A cheap orlon or nylon blanket works very well and can be either white or green.

The surface on which the matting is placed must be level so that the matting can lie perfectly flat. Place a plastic tray (not metal, since it will rust after a little while) on a shelf or table. If the tray has a bump, the matting will not lie flat. There should be no creases, lumps, or bumps when you have cut the matting to fit since the water will not spread evenly through the matting. As a result, some plants will receive too much water and others not enough. The matting must be uniformly moist and contain no puddles.

Any type of pot can be used. A clay pot must have the hole plugged with a piece of moss so that water may be drawn into the pot. Take care that no large piece of charcoal covers the hole in a plastic pot and do not use pebbles in the bottom of the pot since they will interfere with the capillary action. There must be close contact between the soil in the holes of the pot and the matting. When placing a plant, it is advisable to push it down firmly, thus ensuring close contact between the pot and

the matting. A soilless mix, or any soil that permits capillary action, can be used.

The matting does become soiled in time and may need to be washed. How often you do this depends on how fastidious you are. When washing the matting, simply throw it into the washing machine! Fertilizer can be used in this method of watering by pouring it into the matting. Minerals do collect on top of the soil because the only direction available to the water is up. So, about once a month your plants should be drenched with clear water from the top while you hold the plant pot over a sink or bucket.

Algae does appear, but with frequent washing, it need not become much of a problem. Matting is a great help, and can be used to advantage if one is going away on holiday. A plant sitter only has to put in a measured amount of water when the matting is dry. Matting must be used with an awareness of what the plants are doing, their needs, and what they are telling you. You CAN let the matting dry out in between waterings, but not the soil in the pot.

If you have access to a steady supply of rain water, do use it, but otherwise any water that is fit for human consumption is good enough for watering your plants, **EXCEPT** water from a water softener - **never use it on African violets.**



IMPORTANT NOTICE: SENIOR JUDGES

Senior Judges may apply for a renewal examination between May 1 and September 1, 2003. Send request to **Meredith Hall, P.O. Box 370, Marlin, TX 76661. Include check for \$5.00, (payable to AVSA)** and proof of three blue ribbons as per AVSA Handbook, page 83 or S & J Column, AVM, Jan/Feb 2001, page 38. Allow three weeks for delivery. The completed examination must be returned before October 1, 2003 for grading. **Examination may be received on Disk if requested.**

Those Advanced Judges who meet the requirements and wish to apply for their first Senior Judge examination, send check for \$5.00 (payable to AVSA) to Mrs. Hall. Also send the following items of documentation of eligibility per AVSA Handbook.

1. List of all judging schools attended, grades, etc.
2. Signed schedules of five AVSA shows judged, (copy of signed title page with all show information is sufficient)
3. Verification of three blue ribbons earned per AVSA Handbook and S & J Column (AVM-Jan/Feb 2001)

Allow three weeks for delivery. Schedules and cards will be returned if a SASE is included with proper amount of postage. Applications postmarked after September 1, 2003 will be returned and application may be made next year.

No exams will be returned until after October 15, 2003. Please include E-mail address, and you will be notified of receipt of exam, or include a self addressed postcard and it will be returned upon arrival of exam.

Violets on Vacation

by Ina Beaver

Let me tell you my success story of how I went away for over a month, and my plants survived without me.

Knowing we were going many weeks ahead of our summer vacation, I gave away or sold many of my plants at our spring show. I removed leaves from my favorites and potted them up. By the time we left, most were separated into young plants. So, I was able to put several in each tray covered with plastic domes. Two days before we left, I watered each plant thoroughly and drained each one well. I also removed every bloom and bud I could see. The following day I covered everything - small trays with their domes, larger African violets, and gesneriads with clear garbage bags (sliced lengthwise, then tucked in well), and trailing plants such as columneas in sealed bags.

I have a plant room in the basement with sets of standard three-tier light stands (Warning: The more room you have, the more plants you grow.) The temperature there remains about 60 - 65° year round. I set my timers to six hours per day, hung my trailing plants on the sides of the light stands, and stood other plants on elevated pots on the floor.

As soon as I arrived home, I anxiously looked at my plants. Seeing that they hadn't died, I reset the timers to nine hours per day. Two days later I reset them back to their usual twelve hours. The plants on the ends of the trays were very leggy, though the center ones were better. The only loss was three leaves of a "companion plant", *Begonia* 'Buttercup', which had died and began to rot.

By the fourth and fifth day after our return, I had dead-headed, cut back, etc., my extensive buds of outdoor perennials which gave me the time to remove covers from my houseplants. Almost all the violets were either blooming or well budded. The miniature sinningias never looked as healthy or had as many blooms and buds on them. The pots full of micro miniature *Streptocarpus pumilus* were gorgeous! Lesson learned! I'll keep them under glass most of the time.

However, muscle man 'Optimara Leonardo daVinci' had three strong upright peduncles with several open blossoms which had pushed the dome up by an inch. And the blossoms were not disfigured. Amazing!

Some of the most leggy violets required cutting off the bottom of the root balls, setting the plant lower in the pots, and filling in to the brims with new soil. Most of them, though, were growing normally within two weeks. In most cases with the sinningias, etc., I cut the tops off and re-rooted them. All of this means I have more plants than ever (sigh!). Plus now five months later, I have separated and potted up plantlets from standard-sized leaves. They take much longer to grow than mini and semi minis for me. Ah, well, more plants to give away. Someday I'll learn how to reduce my collection ... maybe. Does this sound familiar?

From "Chatter", Journal of the AVS of Canada



KEEPING TRACK OF YOUR AFRICAN VIOLETS

by Suzanne Ress

Good: Using a pen or marker with waterproof ink, write the name of the plant on a stake, on waterproof tape, on a label, on masking tape, or on the pot itself.

Better: After writing the name, add the date the plant was repotted. Use a card file or your computer's database (Excel, etc.) and keep a record of the plant. Include the name of the plant, its description, and any pertinent dates, for example,

when you acquired it, from whom, and when it was repotted.

Best: Name and date repotted on the plant.

Database of name, description, dates acquired, dates repotted.

Database or list of the location of the plant.

Any other information you might want to track, including, but not limited to, budding and full bloom dates, dates of pesticide applications, notes on growing pattern, pictures, etc.

1-800-770-AVSA

Showcase

Sansoucy' Julie-Marie

Exhibited by: Jean Melnechuk

Hybridized by: P. Sansoucy

Large



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Rob's Sailor Bill

Exhibited by: Margaret Gratto

Hybridized by: R. Robinson

Semiminiature Trailer



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Wild African Violet (*Saintpaulia*) Distribution

Endemic to the Eastern Arc Mountains and Coastal Forests of Tanzania and Kenya, a Biodiversity Hotspot

- International Protected Areas
 Towns
 Water bodies
 Railways
 National Protected Areas
 Peaks (> 5000 metres)
 Rivers
 Roads

Projection: Lambert azimuthal
Protected Areas data provided by UNEP-WCMC. Map compiled by Corinna Ravilious and Stephen Grady from information provided by Colin Watkins



This wild African violet map is taken from a small but comprehensive, illustrated field guide compiled by Colin Watkins, Johanna Kolehmainen and Leif Schulman. The distribution of this genus is endemic to one of the most important but also most seriously endangered 'Biodiversity Hotspots' in the world. The field guide is available and advertised on page 63.

GROOMING OF SHOW PLANTS

by Beverley Donsworth

The time has arrived for you to select your plants to grow on for next year's show. Actually, your choice should have been made at the last show when you could have made a list of two or three plants from each class in the Show Schedule. Those plants which perform well, are nice and symmetrical, and have an abundance of flowers are the preferred choice.

Having obtained your plantlets, let them flower once to be sure they are true to color and variety. Remove all damaged outer leaves or baby leaves, all flowers and stems, and pot into fresh potting mix in a 3 1/2 to 4 inch pot with a new wick and water without fertilizer for two weeks. After this time, when disbudding, leave a half inch of flower stalk on the plant, removing only the buds so that the leaf axil will not be damaged where additional buds may form. Disbudding gives reasonable control as to when plants should bloom.

You can now use a fertilizer high in nitrogen to promote the growth of lush green leaves, but I use an African violet fertilizer all the time except for the three weeks when I use a bloom booster. By continually disbudding, all the energy goes into the growth of the plant.

By keeping the plant clean, brushing off any dirt or dust using a soft brush, and stroking the leaves from the center, the plant should remain healthy. Regular misting of foliar feeding in the hot weather is beneficial to keep humidity raised. Leaves can also be washed using tepid water under a running tap to clean and revitalize, but you must mop up the droplets of water before putting the plant back under lights as the leaves may be watermarked.

As the leaves grow larger and heavier and the petioles lengthen, they can be supported by a collar, either made of cardboard or plastic rings. These are useful to protect leaves from becoming entwined with other plants if they are too close together. This is a problem from which we all suffer from time to time.

If growing under lights, you can increase the lights by one hour per week, up to sixteen hours per day. Do not forget to wipe the dust off the tubes (when cold and turned off), as this can cut out quite a large amount of light.

Make sure the plant is centered in the pot, as points can be lost here too if the plant is lopsided. A "neck" can lose points, so scrape the neck and pot it down if this is your problem. Flower stalk stubs, seed pods, faded flowers, and marked leaves can all lose a point.

When looking at the symmetry of a plant, if you have a leaf which you are not sure whether to remove or not, place a piece of paper over it, and you can determine whether it is best removed or left on. Once it is removed, it is too late to decide that it should have been left on. If a leaf has a mark on it, one point will be lost, but if it is removed and makes a break in the symmetry, more points will be lost. It would have been best to leave it there.

When you cease disbudding around eight weeks before the show, and the flowers form and open, be careful to remove any faded blooms, seed pods, and blossom stubs as they can each lose one point. Remove side shoots. Dust, dirt, cat and dog hair can all cost you points. All these things can be so easily rectified that it is a shame to throw away points.

Minis and semi-minis do not need to be disbudded, although some people do, but their size is very important. A mini must not be larger than six inches in diameter, and a semi-mini must not exceed eight inches. Oversize plants would be eliminated from consideration. Be careful also to check that minis and semi-minis go into the correct class in the Show. Check in the Master Variety List.

With trailers, the emphasis is more on form and culture than symmetry, although they are expected to have flowers all around and not just on one side. They must have at least three trailing stems which should be covered with leaves, not bare. Once again, the faded blooms and damaged leaves will lose marks. Remember all pots must be clean.

With regard to 'other Gesneriads', they should all have clean, fresh foliage, with damaged leaves and faded flowers removed. Fresh flowers are very important, while in the 'foliage' class, the leaves must be sufficiently interesting to make up for the absence of bloom.

13 Weeks before Show

Repot plants if needed, remove any marked or undersize leaves, side shoots, and disbud flower stems. Change one fluorescent light tube or wipe clean if only new. Increase light to 11 hours per day.

12 Weeks

Increase lights to 12 hours per day. Check for damaged or twisted leaves. Use a collar to support leaves if plant is large enough and check symmetry to see that they overlap properly. Use skewers or pegs if necessary.

11 Weeks

Keep leaves clean by brushing or washing under tepid water and blotting dry. Continue to train leaves to grow in the correct direction by using pegs, bobby pins, or wooden skewers.

10 Weeks

Foliar feed with diluted Fish Emulsion if leaves are not green enough. Disbud, taking care not to damage the center leaves. Replace other tube and increase lights up to 13 hours per day. Start using a High Phosphorus fertilizer to promote bloom.

9 Weeks

Continue to use Bloom Booster and keep leaves clean.

Disbud 'variegates' for the last time as they may take longer to come into bloom. Increase light up to 14 hours per day.

8 Weeks

Keep checking for side shoots using your long tweezers to remove the leaves. The use of low nitrogen fertilizer can make the leaves and petioles brittle, so be gentle with them when adjusting for symmetry. Continue to use high phosphorus Bloom Booster. Disbud doubles for the last time and increase lights up to fifteen hours per day. If the weather is hot, use a fan to circulate the air and mist spray the plants.

7 Weeks

Disbud semi-doubles for the last time. Change fertilizer back to your normal brand in a clean reservoir.

6 Weeks

Disbud singles, some Optimaras and Rhapsodies for the last time. Check for side shoots and keep the foliage clean. Remove any faded leaves, and adjust others to fill up the gap. Check if a 'neck' has developed which may mean the plant has to be lowered in the pot and topped up with mix. If flower buds

are forming, they may need to be helped out from under the leaves.

4 Weeks

If the buds are slow in forming, increase the lights to sixteen hours per day. Continue fertilizing and cleaning the leaves.

2 Weeks

Brush off any mildew that may appear and be watchful for any other pests and diseases. Make sure the pot is clean and labeled. Remove any peduncles (flower stem stubs), and cut off any faded flowers.

1 week

Prepare boxes to transport plants to the Show. Make sure leaves are clean and any faded flowers are cut off.

One Day before the Show

Pack plants in their boxes ready for transport to the Show.

From *"The African Violet"* publication of
The AV Association of Australia, Inc.

MY FIVE GOLDEN RULES

by Helen McMaster

1. IF YOU ARE HOT OR COLD - SO ARE YOUR PLANTS.

Therefore, it is important to keep your plants in an environment where you are most comfortable. It is no good keeping them in a freezing cold environment and expecting them to live if we don't want to be there either.

2. GOOD LIGHT

African violets need at least twelve hours of light per day and at least eight hours of complete darkness. This light can be either natural light or artificial light:

- (a) Natural Light - the ideal place would be on a northerly window ledge with a sheer curtain to protect them from being burnt by the sun. This is not always possible, so to find the best place, why not put a plant in different places and see which place proves to give you the best results? Then, move all your plants to that area.
- (b) Under artificial light - there are a couple of ways of using lighting this way:
 - (i) use a fluorescent desk lamp over your plants
 - (ii) a proper stand built for African violets

3. WATER - there are many ways of watering plants:

- (a) top watering - this is where water is poured into the pot, from under the leaves.
- (b) bottom watering - stand your plant onto a saucer of water and allow to absorb the water for about one half hour, then pour off any remaining water.
- (c) Texas-style watering - place plants into a tray of water and allow them to take up the water as they

need it, allowing them to dry out before watering again. It is important that you have holes up the side of the pot and vermiculite or perlite in the bottom.

- (d) Wick watering - put a wick into the pot either using panty hose strips, Venetian cord, or synthetic wool. This allows a plant to have its own container to take up water as it needs, and also is a good way of not having to water as regularly.

4. FERTILIZER

Fertilizer is plant food. Plants cannot live only on water. They need to have food regularly to grow good leaves and to produce flowers. A fertilizer with a higher 'N' (nitrogen) reading produces stronger leaves. To produce flowers, the fertilizer needs a higher 'P' (Potassium) reading.

5. CLEAN LEAVES

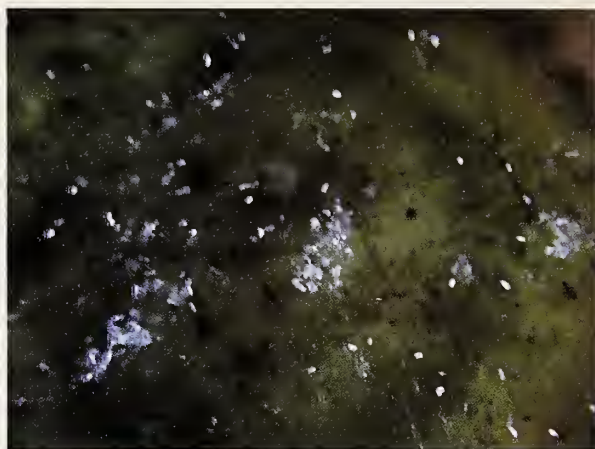
It is important to keep the leaves of your African violet clean from dust because they breathe through their leaves and cleaning the leaves can encourage flowering. I always suggest using a soft makeup brush or painting brush and holding the leaf in your hand for support. Brush from the bottom of the leaf towards the tip.

I hope this can perhaps help you grow African violets easily and allow you to enjoy all of their beauty.

From *The African Violet*, publication of
AV Association of Australia, Inc.



Picture #1



Picture #2



Picture #3



Picture #4



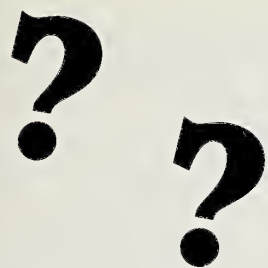
Picture #5



Picture #6

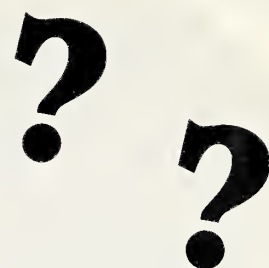


Picture #7



Do I Have Bugs?

by Jillene L. Dolister



Now that's a question we ask ourselves constantly. Every time we hear someone describing what's wrong with their plants, we identify with them. If our plants develop tight centers, we think it must be Cyclamen mites. If the centers get small, we think it has to be broad mites. If we see pollen spilled out on an old bloom, we are sure we have thrips. But there is another pest of African violets that doesn't change the look of our violets until it's too late to save it. That pest is a soil mealy bug.

Recently, I had the opportunity to spend a few days with my African violets. I have about 200 mature, wicked plants sitting on 16-ounce reservoirs, and they all needed grooming. I picked up each one of them and lovingly snapped off the lower leaves that had passed their peak and were detracting from the look of my violets. I was about halfway through the first shelf when I spotted it - white "stuff" floating in 'Anastasia's' reservoir. I had not changed the reservoirs in a while, so some of them were quite green with algae and the white "stuff" stood out like a beacon. (SEE PIC #1 AND #2) I lifted her off her reservoir, and there on the wick was white webbing. (SEE PIC #3) I looked at the bottom of the pot and saw the webbing on the holes of the pot. (SEE PIC #4) I immediately put her, reservoir and all, in another room.

I continued grooming my plants and looked for more signs of mealies. When I had finished, I had only found one more plant with evidence of it being a host to these pests. 'Ness' Blue Confetti' joined 'Anastasia' in exile.

The next day, I pulled these two plants from their pots. There on the sides of the dark green pot, I could see the white webbing, a telltale sign of soil mealy bugs. (SEE PIC #5) The root balls, however, were the ones that really told the tale. The younger feeder roots, the ones on the outside that were next to

the pot, and the ones on the bottom of the pot, were covered with the white webbing I had seen on the inside. (SEE PIC #6) But where were the bugs? I couldn't find them, not that it mattered much. I knew I had them. I finally put some of the webbing covered soil under my dissecting microscope and found them. They were much smaller than I expected. (SEE PIC #7) Both 'Anastasia' and 'Ness' Blue Confetti' were duly decapitated and their crowns restarted in fresh, bug-free soil.

So now what? And, why only two plants in 200? And they were not even close to each other! Ah, the mysteries of nature. But all I wanted to do was kill them; I could philosophize after the funeral. I belong to a lively online message forum, and it wasn't long before I had my answer. All my cyber violet friends said to use Marathon. It is a granular systemic that is sprinkled on the top of the soil and watered in. You use it once, and it kills soil mealy bugs. A lot of people said they applied it twice, three months apart, just to make sure they got them all. I think I will, too.

There are many ways to combat soil mealy bugs, but the best way is early detection. Unlike other pests, by the time you see the first signs of soil mealy bugs in the appearance of the plant itself, there is not much you can do to save it. By checking inside your reservoirs and under your saucers regularly, you can save yourself the grief and heartache that can be associated with the discovery of soil mealy bugs. Remember the signs of mealies: white "stuff" in the reservoirs or saucers, white webbing on the wick and/or bottom of the pot, white webbing sticking to the inside of the pot and root ball. Also remember that even if you only see them in one or two pots, go ahead and treat your whole collection. It's better to be safe than sorry, and these pests can be difficult to eradicate. Do I have bugs? Not for long!

Send Your Choices For AVSA's Best Varieties List

Choices are due by July 31, 2003

Send to: Floyd Lawson - Chairman Variety List

20719 Madrona Ave.

Torrance, CA 90503

Email: floydll@earthlink.net

Note: Postal address is new

CONSTRUCTING AND JUDGING DISH GARDENS

by Cathy Cornibe
Santa Cruz, CA

If you haven't entered a design yet in a show, try a dish garden! I'll help you. While you are constructing it, you should keep in mind how it will be judged.

AVSA SCALE OF POINTS FOR DISH GARDENS

Landscape plan	40 points
Suitability of materials	20 points
Condition of materials	20 points
Cultural perfection	10 points
Relation to container	10 points

LANDSCAPE PLAN (40 points)

You want to create a miniature landscape to portray the class title. The final effect should be of an established planting with a contrast of texture, size, color, and height to add interest.

SUITABILITY OF MATERIALS (20 points)

Pick plants that portray the title and ones that would grow together. If accessories are used, don't overdo it. They should be appropriate and reasonably in scale with the container and each other.

CONDITION OF MATERIALS (20 points)

Plants should be in good shape. The container should be clean.

CULTURAL PERFECTION (10 points)

Plants should be well-grown and free of pests and diseases. Violets should have a reasonable amount of bloom.

RELATION TO CONTAINER (10 points)

The size and amount of the planted material should be in proportion to the container. The container should not dominate the design.

Reread the schedule. Spread some newspapers on a table to minimize the mess. Remember that all plants must be planted in the dish garden and that no cut plant material is allowed.

Start by putting a layer of gravel in the container for drainage. Then add some soil, a little at a time, varying its height to create interest.

Add some plants. Take breaks often to look at the overall design. Sometimes you have to move a few plants, or replace them with others, to get the look you want. If you are doing your dish garden more than a day or two before the show, put an empty pot in the spot for the African violet so it can be

planted there later. Depending on the class title, cover most of the soil and perlite with sifted soil, bark, ground cover, gravel, sand, or whatever is appropriate. After you are finished, brush off any excess soil that is on the plants.

Many dish gardens could have been a Best-in-Class with a few changes. Refer to the following drawings.

Class Title: "Down Under"



This dish garden has a few problems.

1. The overall height is too short for the size of the container. As a rough guideline, the height should be about 1 1/2 times the width of the container.
2. Although a kangaroo could help to portray the title, this one is too big. It is very distracting!
3. This violet needs more blooms and it has several gaps in its symmetry.



This dish garden is better!

1. It has more overall height, and the plants are more varied in height.
2. The container is shallow.
3. A small kangaroo, partially hidden behind the violet, helps to portray the class title.
4. This violet is much nicer than the one above. It has more blooms, it is more symmetrical, and its lighter foliage stands out better in a dark container.

Source: AVSA Handbook for African Violet Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges

Musings From the Potting Bench

by Margaret Taylor

We move happily into spring, when we leave behind those winter chills and ills, and we look forward to a resurgence of vitality both for ourselves and our African violets.

Experience has taught me to view the first month of spring with caution. It is not unusual to experience a cold snap; therefore, it may be wise to delay most repotting until conditions are ideal.

African violets may go into shock after radical disturbance of root systems. Soil mix, although fresh and used at room temperature, can become very cold at night. Warmer temperatures assist recovery considerably. Cold condition repotting may result in crown leaves curling under. They are likely to stay that way just to remind us that tender tissue does not like to sit in cold loose mix.

We all have our favorite tools of trade, and here are some I use when setting up the potting bench.

1. Scissors for trimming roots
2. Wooden kabob sticks for separating plantlets
3. Sucker-Plucker for scraping necks
4. Dental instruments for nudging out blossom stubs and side shoots (kinder than tweezers)
5. Meat baster for *moistening* newly potted plants
6. A soft complexion brush for the grooming of leaves
7. Magnifiers - one with a light x10 magnification, and a tiny x20.
8. A can of adhesive remover and a cloth for removing labels (before setting pots to soak)
9. Wet wicks and pre-cut fiberglass screening for lining base of pots.

Procedure

Potting up - or transferring to a larger pot - 2 inches to 3 inches, 3 inches to 4 inches, and, in special cases for large plants being prepared for show, 4 inches to 5 or 6 inches. Shallow pots are preferred, and in the case of trailers, the shallower the better. Mold potting is a quick and easy to pot up; however, I like to leach plants and drain very well a few days beforehand. This to cleanse the often dense root ball of built-up salts before going into the fresh mix.

For the more radical job of repotting, this leaching is unnecessary. If the soil has been allowed to dry a little, this procedure is much easier. The old mix is crumbled gently off the roots, old leaves removed until a nice symmetrical leaf pattern remains. The remaining necks are then gently rubbed down to remove the scales. Harsh scraping serves no useful purpose. The amount of root trimming usually equals the length of the neck.

Sometimes a radical reduction of the size of the plant necessitates using a smaller pot. If roots are diseased, as might occur in root rot, or the presence of soil mealy bug, they may be removed entirely. As long as a small remainder of neck remains, the plant has a good chance of recovery. If the neck itself is placed into a small core of vermiculite in the center of the usual mix and the whole pot and plant encased in a large blown-up plastic bag (try resealable plastic bags), re-rooting will usually take place in 3 to 4 weeks in good light. I prefer to allow freshly repotted plants to rest close to the lights, but not actually under the lights, for a few days.

As wick watering is my preferred choice, I use clear water in the reservoirs initially. Fertilizer is used as usual when the first container is used up.

Fertilizers, of which several kinds are used, are color coded with food coloring dyes so I do not have to depend on an ailing memory.

Miniature African violets often require severe root trimming to keep them small. This sometimes causes marked leaves. It helps, I find, to heed Dr. Ralph Robinson's advice to delay watering for at least eight hours after repotting.

Warm water is a must for all watering of freshly potted plants. Best to moisten, rather than drown.

It goes almost without saying that a great feeling of satisfaction follows a potting session, especially when uninterrupted. A bonus for me is that I can "play in the dirt" even when the weather keeps me out of the garden.

From *The African Violet*, publication of the
AV Association of Australia, Inc.



In the Beginning

by Cheryl Salatino

Believe it or not, the African Violet was discovered growing in the wild in East Africa - the Usambara mountain district of Tanzania. In this region, it was not only found growing in the foothills but all the way up to an altitude of 7,000 feet. While the plant's natural environment was the tropical rain forest, its ability to grow in high altitudes made it tolerant of lower than tropical temperatures. In the wild, a natural canopy of trees protected the African violet from direct sun and maintained moist conditions.

The man that discovered the African violet was Captain Baron Walter von St. Paul. He collected specimens of the plant he called the Usambara violet and sent them to his father in Germany. The senior Baron von St. Paul had success growing the plants and introduced Hermann Wendland, Director of the Royal Botanic Garden in Hanover, Germany, to this new variety. Wendland wrote the first scientific description of the plant and gave it its botanical name. Recognizing the discoverers, the genus was called *Saintpaulia*. The species was named *ionantha* to recall its violet-like flowers. Wendland placed the plant in the Gesneriad family, which bears no relation to the true violet (the *viola* family).

It wasn't until the 1920's when the nursery Armacost and Royston of Los Angeles introduced new African violet varieties. They had imported seeds from Suttons of England and Benary of Germany to produce ten commercially available plants. Each of these plants produced single flowers in the blue/purple range, although the foliage varied in shape and size. These original ten included 'Admiral', 'Amethyst', 'Blue

Boy', 'Commodore', 'Mermaid', 'Neptune', 'Norseman', 'Number 32', 'Sailor Boy', and 'Viking'.

For a long time, the flowers produced on the original varieties were the only types seen on African violets. Not until 1939, when Michigan grower Ed Wangbichler found a sport of 'Blue Boy' growing double blue flowers, did things change. It was quickly discovered that these double flowers did not drop their blooms like the single varieties. This discovery made the African violet much more attractive to the commercial trade and sealed its successful future.

However, 'Blue Boy' made even more of a contribution to the development of the African violet. In 1940 another sport was produced in the greenhouses of Holton and Hunkle in Milwaukee. A clear pink flower was produced. Again, a breakthrough - now it was color. Another mutation provided a different type of foliage - rounded, slightly wavy, and thicker, with a white patch located at the leaf base. This new foliage was called girl-type foliage.

Up until this point, each of these early developments occurred in sports or mutations. Yet, the African violet was becoming noticed as an untapped genetic treasure. It was Peter Ruggeri, a hybridizer in San Francisco, who was the first to introduce a pure white African violet seedling in 1942. Finally, the secret was out. Many patient hybridizers since that time have contributed to the evolution of the African violet. These creative hybridizers have brought us the wonderful and amazing varieties we are growing in our collections today.

This Thing Called 'pH'

The term pH is an acronymous reference to "Puissance de Hydrogen", characterizing the relative level of acidity and/or alkalinity attended to a substance. It is a value expressed in terms of the relative amounts of hydrogen ions (H^+ ; protons) and hydroxide ions (OH^-) present. More succinctly, it can be described as the negative logarithm of the molar concentration of H^+ ions, or simply $-\log(H^+) = 10 \text{ pH}$. And, with that, so much for the academics of the matter!

An acid or base strength of a solution is described as its pH index on a scale of 0 to 14. While the value "7" is neutral, "0" is strongly acidic (something like battery acid). The value 14 on the other extreme would be strongly basic or alkaline (akin to lye or some such substance). Fruits would be an example of slightly acid pH; while pure water is neutral, and soaps would exemplify a slightly alkaline condition.

The measure of pH is crucial to quantitative chemical analysis, and must be determined with rather precise

titration. Control of pH is of major concern in the manufacturing process of food, paper, and chemical products, etc. It is no less important in effecting good crop yields in agriculture, the maintenance of water supply quality, and such other efforts as acid rain studies and the like.

For the African violet hobbyist, there are several means of testing for pH, but perhaps the best way is with a soil testing kit. There are several kits on the market. Dependable electronic testers are quite expensive, and the test using litmus paper is too unreliable. Our own preference is to check our water with a pH kit sold by aquarium stores. Regardless of the test method used, the results should be reliably verified several times to insure that an accurate check is being made.

From *The Violet Connection*,
publication of the Ohio State AVS

Coming Events



May 2 & 3 - VIRGINIA

Richmond AVA Show/Sale
Virginia Center Commons Mall
Rt. 1 North and I-295
Info: (804) 594 - 0643

May 2 & 3 - KENTUCKY

Four Rivers AVS Show/Sale
Kentucky Oaks Mall
5101 Hinkleville Rd
1-24 & Hwy 60 West
Paducah, Kentucky
Both Days: 10am - 5pm
Info: Diane Fischer
(270) 562 - 7513
Email: cndfischer@vol.com

May 2 - 4 - NEW YORK

AVS of Syracuse 50th
Annual Show/Sale
Shoppingtown Mall
5649 Erie Blvd. East
Syracuse, NY
May 2 - Noon - 9pm
May 3 - 10am - 9:30pm
May 4 - 11am - 6pm

May 2 - 4 - PENNSYLVANIA

AVS of Springfield S2nd
Annual Show/Sale
Springfield Mall, Rt. 1 and Rt. 320
Springfield, PA
May 2 & 3 - Noon - 9pm
May 4 - 11am - 5pm
Info: Brenda Nyce
(610) 724 - 1953
Debbie Schaffer
(610) 644 - S940

May 2 - 4 - NEW JERSEY

Garden State AVC Show/Sale
Market Gair Mall
3535 US Route 1 South
Princeton, NJ
Info: Fred Hill (609) 291 - 8927
www.princetonol.com/groups/gsavc

May 3 & 4 - CONNECTICUT

Silvermine AVS Judged Show/Sale
Earthplace (formerly The Nature
Center)
10 Woodside Ln
Westport, CT
May 3 - 1:30pm - 5pm
May 4 - Noon - 4pm
Info: (203) 226 - 1784
Email: marjorie.rosenberg@snet.net

May 3 & 4 - MASSACHUSETTS

Bay State AVS Show/Sale
Waltham Field Station
240 Beaver St
Waltham, MA
May 3 - 2pm - 6pm
May 4 - 10am - 1pm
Info: Susan Gimblet
(401) 624 - 8066
Email: gimblet@apol.net

May 3 - CALIFORNIA

Carlsbad AVS Judged Show/Sale
El Camino Plaza Mall
Carlsbad, CA
Hours: 12:30pm - 7pm
Info: Patty Ragan (510) 372 - 1771
Email: PLRBKLDY579@aol.com

May 3 - MISSOURI

Missouri AVS Show/Sale
Trinity Presbyterian Church
1600 Rollins Rd
Columbia, MO
Hours: 9am - 2pm
Info: Dorothy Anderson
(573) 442 - 4798
Email: dander02@coin.org

May 3 - NEVADA

Reno-Sparks AVS Show/Sale
Reno Town Mall
Peckham at South Virginia
Reno, NV
Info: Kathy Roubal
(530) 993 - 1425
Email: kroubal@fs.fed.us

May 3 - CANADA

AVS of Greater Montreal
Annual Display/Sale
Church of the Resurrection
99 Mount Pleasant Rd
Point Claire, Quebec
Info: Greta Durand
(514) 695 - 5149

May 3 - NORTH CAROLINA

Triangle AVS
Display/Sale/Workshops
Bluebird Greenhouse
4821 Jesse Dr.
Apex, NC
Info: (919) 362 - 0530

May 3 & 4 - CANADA

Société des Saintpaulia de Montréal
Annual Judged Show
Chalet du parc Maisonneuve
4601 Sherbrook St. East
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
Hours: 10am - 4pm
Info: Monique Beaucage
(514) 990 - 5701
Email: monique_beaucage@hotmail.com

May 3 & 4 - CALIFORNIA

AVS of South Bay Show/Sale
Westgate Mall
1600 Saratoga Ave
San Jose, CA
May 3 - 9am - 7pm
May 4 - 9am - 5pm
Info: Irene Thomas
(650) 369 - 3452

May 3 & 4 - WISCONSIN

Oshkosh Violet Society
23rd Annual Show/Sale
St. Josaphat Church, Parish Center
1353 Walnut St
Oshkosh, WI
May 3 - 10am - 4:30pm
May 4 - 9:30am - 5pm
Info: Kevin Degner
(920) 426 - 3764
Email: Kdegner@mcLeodusa.net

May 3 & 4 - CALIFORNIA

Ventura County AVS
Judged Show/Sale
Pacific View Mall
Mills & Main Streets
Ventura, CA
May 3 - 10am - 9pm
May 4 - 10am - 7pm
Info: VCAVS1@aol.com
Penny Harvey (805) 646 - 7716

May 4 & 5 - ILLINOIS

Illinois AVS AVSA Judged Show/Sale
Wyndham Lisle Hotel
3000 Warrenville Rd
Lisle, IL
May 4 - 12:30pm - 5pm
May 5 - 9am - 4pm
Info: Steve Covolo (773)
646 - 6574
Email: Steffano2@aol.com

May 9 - NORTH CAROLINA

Coastal Plains AVC Sale
Nash County Senior Center
(at rear of Cultural Building)
Washington St, downtown Nashville
Nashville, NC
Hours: 9am - 4pm
Info: Lucille Prutsman
(252) 459 - 3722

May 9 & 10 - FLORIDA

Upper Pinellas AVS
Mother's Day Plant Sale
Crossroads Mall
US 19
Clearwater, FL
Mall Hours
Info: Phyllis King
(727) 398 - 7450
Email: phyllisk@gte.net

May 9 & 10 - OHIO

Parmatown AVC
AVSA Judged Show/Sale
Parmatown Mall
7899 W. Ridgewood Dr.
Parma, OH
May 9 - 9am - 9pm
May 10 - 9am - 5pm
Info: Martha Bell
(330) 483 - 3546
Email: mbell77@msn.com

May 9 & 10 - MARYLAND

Baltimore AVC Annual Show/Sale
Catonsville United Methodist Church
Melvin Ave
Catonsville, MD
May 9 - 1pm - 5pm
May 10 - 9am - 4pm
Info: Shirley Huffman
(301) 953 - 7554
Email: Bshuffman2@aol.com

May 9 & 10 - GEORGIA

AVS of Greater Atlanta
Mini Show/Sale
North DeKalb Mall
2050 Lawrenceville Highway
Decatur, GA
Mall Hours
Info: Kathy Spissman
(770) 939 - 5289
Email: Mrsstrep@bellsouth.net

May 10 - CALIFORNIA

Fancy Bloomers AVS Plant Sale
Coddington Mall
Guemerville Rd at Hwy 101
Santa Rosa, CA
Hours: 10am - 4pm
Info: Byron Bork
(707) 527 - 8362

May 10 - WISCONSIN

Sundowners and Crosstown
AVS Joint Plant Sale
Olbrich Botanical Gardens
3330 Atwood Ave
Madison, WI
Hours: 9am - 4pm
Info: Alice Peterson
(608) 833 - 5552
Email: petersonad@aol.com

May 10 & 11 - OHIO

Cincinnati AVS Annual Show/Sale
Eastgate Mall
Rt. 32 Exit off Rt. 275
Cincinnati, OH
Mall Hours
Info: Penny Wichman
(859) 689 - 5570
Email: pennypwic@aol.com

May 10 - TEXAS

Corpus Christi AVS
Mother's Day Plant Sale
Padre Staples Mall
(Center Court)
5488 S. Padre Island Dr.
Corpus Christi, TX
Hours: 10am - 5pm
Info: Marjorie Bullard
(361) 992 - 3009
Email: marjorcp@sbcbglobal.net

May 10 - OHIO

Upper Miami Valley
AVS Judged Show/Sale
Miami Valley Centre Mall
St. Rt. 36
Piqua, OH
Hours: 9am - 9pm
Info: Terena Stotler (937) 492 - 6588
Email: terena@bright.net

May 10 - NEW JERSEY

AVC of Burlington County Annual
Judged Show/Sale
Burlington Center Mall
Route 541
Burlington, NJ
Hours: Noon - 9pm
Info: Florence Murphy
(609) 386 - 9234

May 10 & 11 - TEXAS

NASA Area AVS and Office
Violets and Lunch
Combined Annual Show/Sale
Clear Lake Park Building
5001 NASA Road One
Seabrook, Texas
May 10 - 9am - 4pm
May 11 - 10am - 4pm
Info: (281) 488 - 0267
(281) 286 - 1529

May 17 & 18 - NEBRASKA

Omaha AVS Show/Sale
Lauritzen Gardens Omaha
Botanical Center
100 Bancroft St
Omaha, NE
Hours: Noon - 5pm
Info: Joyce Stork (402) 721 - 1478
Email: kents@tvsonline.net

May 17 & 18 - CALIFORNIA

Burbank & Montrose AVS
Display/Sale
Descanso Gardens
1418 Descanso Dr.
La Canada, CA
May 17 - 9am - 4pm
May 18 - 11am - 2pm
Info: (818) 846 - 1241
(818) 848 - 8596

May 24 & 25 - DELAWARE

Delaware AVS Show/Sale
Boscov's Department Store
Christiana, DE
May 24 - 10am - 5pm
May 25 - Noon - 5pm
Info: Anne Petrucci
(302) 652 - 8839

May 24 & 25 - CALIFORNIA

AVS of San Francisco
Judged Show/Sale
San Francisco County Fair Bldg
9th Ave @ Lincoln Way
San Francisco, CA
May 24 - 10am - 5pm
May 25 - 10am - 4pm
Info: Gary R. Beck (415) 771 - 2342
Email: garyrbeck@aol.com

June 3 - PENNSYLVANIA

AV Enthusiasts of Bucks County
Exhibit/Sale
Oley Valley High School, Room 135
17 Jefferson St
Oley, PA
Hours: 7:30pm - 9:30pm
Info: AVEBC@aol.com

June 7 - NEW JERSEY

Tristate AV Council Judging School
Taught by Kay Rotando
Frelinghuysen Arboretum
East Hanover Ave
Morristown, NJ
9am
Info: Enid Branson
Email: sburr10591@aol.com

June 14 - CALIFORNIA

AV Council of Southern CA
Sales Jamboree
First Lutheran Church
2900 W. Carson St.
Torrance, CA
Hours: 10am - 4pm
Info: Dorothy Kosowsky
(626) 333 - 1127
Email: dot3joe@earthlink.net



Saintpaulia Species Plants

From the African Violet Master List of Species and Cultivars

- S. brevopilosa** (S 10a/1964) (B. Burt) Single light purple/darker center; 1-4 per peduncle, very short lived. Light green, small, round, thin, glossy, soft, velvety, tightly bunched/pale back, randomly curved petioles. Usually single crown. **Miniature to Semiminiature to Small standard**
- S. confusa** (S 16/1958) (B. Burt) Single dark purple, 2-6 per peduncle. Variable floriferousness. Medium green, thin, quilted, leathery, flexible, serrated/near-white back. Often multi-crowned. May develop sideways growth habit. **Semiminiature to Standard**
- S. difficilis** (S 15/1958) (B. Burm) Single medium **to dark blue**, 5-7 per peduncle. Chartreuse, longifolia, tends to spoon, thin, deep veining, crinkled, rough, long hairs. Long, bent petiole. Usually single crown, may sucker. **Standard**
- S. diplotricha Punter #0** (S 12c/1947) (B. Burt) Single pale lilac/bright yellow stamens; seven per peduncle. Dark green, pointed, thick, serrated. Single crown, may sucker. **Small standard**
- S. diplotricha Punter #6** (S 12a/1947) (B. Burt) Single pale lilac to light blue/bright yellow stamens; one per peduncle. Dark green, small, round, may spoon, lotus-type. Single crown, may sucker. **Standard**
- S. diplotricha Punter #7** (S 12b/1947) (B. Burt) Single blue-gray to near white/bright yellow stamens. Dark olive green, plain, heart-shaped, pointed/light red back. Single crown, may sucker. **Small standard**
- S. goetzeana** (S 10/1900) (A. Engler) Single tiny pale lilac to near white/darker upper petals. Three or more per peduncle, rarely blooms. Dark green, small, round, thick, smooth edge/lighter back. Creeping, branched stems, multi-crowned. **Miniature trailer**
- S. grandifolia #237** (S 7/1958) (B. Burm) Single blue-violet, one or more per peduncle, floriferous. Light green, elliptical, very thin, long flexible petiole. Usually single crown. **Large**
- S. grandifolia #299** (S 7a/1958) (B. Burm) Single dark blue-violet, one or more per peduncle, very floriferous. Light to medium green, elliptical, very thin, crinkled, long flexible petiole. Usually single crown. **Large**
- S. grotei** (S 17/1921) (A. Engler) Single, light-medium blue/variable darker eye, 2-3 per peduncle. Flowers may hide under foliage. Pale-dark green, variable texture, round, serrated on most clones. Usually near-white back, occasionally red. Green or brown flexible petiole, variable internode length. **Large trailer**
- S. inconspicua** (S 1/1958) (B. Burt) Single small blue-spotted white, atypical of other species, one or more per peduncle. Frail. Not known in collections. **Miniature trailer**
- S. intermedia** (S 9/1958) (B. Burt) Single medium blue, 5-7 per peduncle. sparse. Olive green, small, round, tends to spoon, velvety, slightly serrated/purple-red back, prominent green veins. Single crown to trailing. **Small standard or Trailer**
- S. ionantha** (S 5/1893) (H. Wendland) Single blue-violet, 4-5 per peduncle, very floriferous. Dark green, pointed, heart-shaped, tends to spoon, thick, quilted, glossy, slightly serrated, long red-brown petiole/red back. **Large**
- S. magungensis** (S 19/1950) (E. Roberts) Single small dark violet-blue/darker eye, 2-4 per peduncle, very floriferous. Round, cupped-down, pebbled, slightly serrated, brown petiole/green-white back, prominent midrib. **Semiminiature trailer**
- S. magungensis var. minima** (S 19a/1964) (B. Burt) Single tiny light purple/darker eye, 1-2 per peduncle, rarely blooms. Medium, small, cupped-down, thin, hairy, serrated, red-brown petiole. **Miniature trailer**
- S. magungensis var. occidentalis** . (S 19b/1964) (B. Burt) Single medium violet-blue/darker eye, 2-5 per peduncle. Medium green, ovate, tends to fold and spoon, glossy. **Bushy trailer**
- S. nitida** (S 13/1958) (B. Burt) Single dark blue-purple, 8-10 per peduncle, floriferous. Dark green, round, may spoon, smooth, glossy, slender brown petiole/red back. Open growth. **Small or bushy trailer or multi-crowned standard**

- S. orbicularis** (S 14/1947) (B. Burtt) Single small light lilac to almost white/darker eye, 5-8 per peduncle, floriferous but drops easily. Bright green, small, round to heart-shaped, thin, glossy. Single or multi-crowned. **Small standard to Standard**
- S. orbicularis var. purpurea** (S 14a/1964) (B. Burtt) Single small dark purple, 5-8 per peduncle, very floriferous. Dark green, round to heart-shaped, thin, glossy/light back. Single or multiple crown. **Standard**
- S. pendula** (S 8/1958) (B. Burm) Single pale-medium blue, one per peduncle, difficult to bloom. Pale to yellow-green, textured, slightly elongated to ovate, very hairy, serrated, variable internode length/pale back. **Trailer**
- S. pendula var. kizarae** (S 8a/1964) (B. Burtt) Single lavender, 2-4 per peduncle, floriferous. Light green, round, hairy, serrated. **Trailer**
- S. pusilla** (S 2/1900) (A. Engler) Single, tiny white/mauve top petals, one or more per peduncle. Leaves tiny triangular/purple back. Not known in collections, but may exist in some mountain ranges in Tanzania. **Miniature**
- S. rupicola** (S 10b/1964) (B. Burtt) Single light-medium blue, three or more per peduncle. Light-medium green, heart-shaped, soft, smooth, glossy, velvety/light back. Leaves sometimes thick. **Multi-crowned standard or Bushy trailer**
- S. shumensis** (S 3/1955) (B. Burtt) Single pale blue to almost white/variable darker eye, usually four per peduncle. Sparse bloom. Bright green, pebbled, glossy, slightly serrated, short petiole, leaf blade twisted in some clones. Single crown, but tends to sucker easily. **Miniature to Semiminiature**
- S. teitensis** (S 4/1958) (B. Burtt) Single light blue-violet; 1-2 per peduncle, rare blooms hide under leaves. Dark, slightly pointed, may spoon; thick, rough, brittle, glossy/red, sometimes light green back. Usually grows upright. **Standard**
- S. tongwensis** (S 6/1947) (B. Burtt) Single pale blue, may show dark pinwheel marking when grown cool: 4-6 per peduncle. Very floriferous. Dark green. pointed, narrow, very thick, hairy, slightly serrated/some red back. May appear **variegated** with mottled pattern over main veins. Usually upright single crown, rarely suckers. **Standard**
- S. velutina** (S 11/1958) (B. Burtt) Single small medium violet/darker eye, some white tips. Five per peduncle floriferous. Black-green, round to heart-shaped, may cup up or down, thin, hairy, velvety pronounced veining, serrated/red-purple back. Single crown, may sucker. **Standard**
- S. House Of Amani** Single medium lavender-blue, 3-7 per peduncle, hides under leaves. Short-lived. Dark green, pointed, quilted, smooth, prominent veins, serrated/occasional red back petiole. Usually single crown. Never declared a true species. **Standard**

Creating a full pot of tip cuttings for branching gesneriads

by John Beaulieu



Most 'starter plants' consist of 2 or 3 rooted tip cuttings. Once they are well established and have doubled their length, you can take your sharp knife and cut the stems in half.



These new tip cuttings are then placed back into the potting mix to root. Keep the mix moist while the cuttings root. This procedure can be repeated, depending on how large a pot you want to fill.



Most cut ends will branch into 2 new stems!

From "An Introduction to Gesneriads, African Violets and their Relatives"

2003 VACATION GUIDE

Compiled by David Buttram

When making plans to travel this summer, be sure to include stops at your favorite AVSA Commercial Member. The Commercial Members listed below invite you to visit them and see the latest varieties as well as growing supplies. Many of them also grow a wide selection of other gesneriads and houseplants. Please note that several growers are available by appointment only. The necessary arrangements for your visit

should be made by mail, phone, or e-mail well in advance of your visit.

The list of growers is laid out as though you were driving from New York southward to Pennsylvania. Then the growers are listed in a zigzag manner up and down across our great country, winding up in Washington. Drive safely and enjoy your trip.

Smith's Country Cottage

Geoff & Aileen Smith
109 Ogden Parma T.L. Rd.
Spencerport, NY 14559
858-352-6445
gsmith352@netzero.net
10:00 AM-5:00 PM. Monday through
Saturday or by appointment.
Retail, limited Wholesale, Standards,
Minis, Variegates, and Supplies.

Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses, Inc.

Paul Sorano
14 Mutchler St., P.O. Box 249
Dolgeville, NY 13329
315-429-8291
info@lyndonlyon.com
8:00 AM-4:00 PM (Mon-Fri),
10 AM-4 PM (Sat),
Noon-4:00 PM
(Sun-April through Sept only).
African violets, Gesneriads, Orchids.
Located just ten minutes off
Interstate 90, in the foothills of the
Adirondack Mountains.
www.lyndonlyon.com

Violet Venture

Fay Wagman
52 Harper Dr., Pittsford, NY 14534
858-381-6384
fayw@aol.com
By appointment - please call ahead.
Visitors welcome.
Retail, Standards, Minis, Supplies,
Variegates, Gesneriads.



Rob's Violets

Rob & Olive Ma Robinson
7209 County Rd. 12, (P.O. Box 9)
Naples, NY 14512
585-374-8592
robsviolet@aol.com
Noon - 5:00 PM, every day of week.
Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and
New Years Day.
African violets, gesneriads, rare and
unusual flowering houseplants. We ship
anywhere in the world, anytime of the
year. Tours welcome.
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FIVE WAYS TO PROPAGATE AFRICAN VIOLETS

by Kim Thorogood

From a leaf

This is the most common way to propagate African violets. Prepare your pot (a standard 2" pot or smaller) by first writing the name of the plant and the date on the side. Insert the wick and fill with potting mix. Smooth off the top and now you're ready to prepare your leaf.

The leaf should be fresh and healthy, not too old, not too young. Using a razor blade or a sharp pair of scissors, cut the leaf stalk (petiole) about 1 1/2" below the bottom of the leaf and on a 45 degree angle (when you look at it side on). If preferred, dip the leaf into rooting gel or powder and then slide the leaf into the pot until the leaf blade is level with the top of the potting mix. Water thoroughly and leave to drain for twenty-four hours. Then you can put your leaf and pot into a plastic sandwich bag, seal it and leave in a warm, well-lit position until plantlets emerge. This could take anywhere between six weeks and six months, so be patient.

From a crown

Chances are, if you're planting a crown cutting, you're either rejuvenating a "palm tree", hacking the middle out of a chimera because you want lots more (and you're going to plant the center), or your plant has become sick with either a soil-borne problem or it is rotting. First, get your pot ready as described earlier.

To prepare a crown cutting, lop off the top of the plant with about 1 1/2" of stem. Take off all but the top two rows of leaves and scrape off the crust from the stem. Dust with rooting hormone powder or dip it into hormone gel if required. Poke a hole in the center of the pot, and then gently slide the crown cutting into the hole. Water through thoroughly and leave to drain for twenty-four hours. Then you can put your crown cutting and pot into a plastic sandwich bag, seal it, and leave in a warm, well-lit position until the cutting has put down roots. This usually takes a couple of months, and then the crown cutting is ready to be put on water.

From a sucker

You've got a really nice plant, the symmetry is beautiful (and you don't want to remove a leaf), but your friend has asked you for one.

If the plant has produced a sucker, propagating this will get you a new plant much faster than by leaf. The trick is to remove the sucker without damaging the plant. Obviously, if you remove the sucker when you're repotting the main plant, it is much easier, but plants don't always produce suckers at a convenient time. So, to remove a sucker, you can use your "sucker plucker" tool, a sharp pencil, or a bamboo skewer. Find the base of the sucker, and then use your tool of choice to gently pry the sucker away from the main plant. If its small leaves are tangled with the main plant, you will need to be very careful when removing it. Plant the sucker in the same way as the crown

cutting, bearing in mind that it will probably be much smaller.

From a bloom stalk

You would generally only go to the trouble of propagating by bloom stalk when you have a chimera that hasn't suckered, or one of your plants has produced an amazing flower from which you want to create a plant. It is possible, although 100% success is not guaranteed with this method. A week or so before you want to propagate via this method, pinch off the flower just above the small leaves on the bloom stalk so that it can strengthen. When you're ready to plant it, remove the bloom stalk from the plant and cut the stem (peduncle) about one to one and a half inches below the small leaves. Dust with hormone powder or dunk the stalk into hormone gel. Poke a hole in the center of the prepared pot (as described earlier) and gently slide the bloom stalk in. Enclose in a plastic bag and wait for an interminably long time, at least six months, maybe more. If the bloom stalk survives, small plantlets will form at the leaf axils. They can then be removed and planted as for suckers.

From seed

Prepare a shallow pot as described earlier, but ensuring that the full name of the seed to be sown is on the pot, e.g. "Valesca x Unknown". Settle the damp potting mix in the pot by lightly tapping the pot on the table, and then spray the surface with a fine misting of water (preferably warm). Over a sheet of white paper, which has been first folded in half to form a crease, open the seedpod using a needle or some other sharp instrument and shake the seed into the crease in the paper. Gently bring up the sides of the paper so it forms a trough, hold the paper over the pot, and gently shake some seed onto the surface. Cover the seeds, leave in a warm, well-lit place, and wait for the seedlings to emerge. Once they are about one half inch high, prick out the seedlings and transplant into small pots with wicks. The excitement lies in waiting to see what you produce.

The importance of labeling your pot correctly

How many times have you bought a plant based on the name or description and then found when it flowered, it isn't what you thought it should be? It's very important to get the name right, particularly if the purchaser wants to show the plant at a later stage. While you're still getting to know the names, it's a good idea to check the Master Variety List or ask one of the more experienced growers if what is marked on the pot is correct. For instance, our club's last year's project plant was 'Ness' Crinkle Blue', although some refer to it as 'Crinkle Blue'. The correct, registered name uses the Ness' prefix.

It is also helpful to include the date that the plant was last potted. This lets the purchaser know if the plant is ready to be re-potted.

From the *Newsletter*, of the Early Morn AV Group, Australia

HOW TO SEPARATE BABY PLANTS

by Sue Gardner

This article discusses how to separate plantlets from the parent leaf and establish in individual pots. Putting down a leaf to obtain baby plants is a satisfying way to obtain new varieties. One advantage is that the new plants are used to your environment and do not need to spend energy adapting. Also, you can obtain several plants from one leaf, enabling you to sell or give some away.



When your leaf has produced plantlets about 3cm high, you can safely transplant them. Of course you may wait until they are taller and stronger - it is OK to leave them until about 8cm high. (If the baby plants are not sturdy, cut off the top half of the mother leaf to stimulate their growth, then wait a few weeks before potting up.)

Examine the babies to see if there are two center leaves of reasonable size in at least two of them. If the centers have no pair of center leaves, wait until several of them do. The centers do not develop well if they are not properly formed before transplanting, and fertilizer salts often accumulate and keep burning off any tiny center leaves as they form.



*Plantlet with
center leaves*



*Plantlet with
undeveloped center*

1. Spread newspaper on your bench and remove the clump of plantlets from the pot. If it does not come out easily, use a skewer poked through a hole on the bottom or side of the pot to gently lever it out.
2. Assess your clump - choose to keep only the strong, healthy plantlets. Be ruthless! It is better to have sturdy plants than weak ones. Anyway, how many of the one variety do you really want? It restricts the number of varieties you can grow if you have too many of one.
3. Collect enough small pots (5-7.5cm) to match the number of baby plants you wish to transplant. **Write** the name of the variety on the side of the pots; place an acrylic wick through a hole in the bottom and add moist African violet potting mix.
4. Make a hole in the potting mix large enough to contain the roots of the plantlet, place it in the hole, and fill with more mix. If the plantlet is wobbly in the pot, use a couple of hairpins to hold one or more leaves steady.



Hairpin pinning petiole to stabilize plantlet in pot.

5. Gently brush any potting mix from the leaves.
6. Water plantlet sparingly and place on reservoir.
7. Place in a warm light position. If your plantlet has very little root, do not fertilize for a few weeks, and then use very dilute solution until plant starts to grow. Fertilizer salts build up when the plant has insufficient rootball to absorb them. If your plant suffers transplant shock (usually shown by drooping), enclose in a plastic bag or container covered with clear plastic film for a few days.

When the plantlet is established in the pot, resume normal strength fertilizer in reservoir. (1/8 teaspoon solid fertilizer in 2 liters water).

From the "Newsletter" of the Early Morn AV Group, Australia

Growing from Rhizomes

Some of the easiest to grow gesneriads are those which grow from rhizomes. Rhizomes are modified stems with leaves reduced to fleshy scales, and they help the plant to survive drought, cold, and adverse growing conditions. When the weather begins to warm and rain falls, the rhizomes will break dormancy and produce new growth, which will bloom in the coming season.

The gesneriads that have scaly rhizomes come from Mexico, Central America, and northern South America. Although some of the Asian species have a thickened stem that forms a type of rhizome, these do not form scales, and they tend not to go into a true dormancy.

Achimenes, *Smithiantha*, *Kohleria*, and *Gloxinia* are the best known of the rhizomatous gesneriads. Other species that form rhizomes are *Diastema*, *Phinaea*, *Eucodonia*, *Niphaea*, *Pearcea*, and *Koellikeria*. Some of these plants have quite short dormant periods while others, like *Achimenes*, can remain dormant for months. Some, like *Smithiantha*, produce large rhizomes while others, such as *Pearcea*, some kohlerias, and some gloxinias usually produce small stringy structures.

Culture is the same for all the rhizomatous gesneriads. In spring, pot the rhizomes using a good quality potting mix that is light and retains moisture. The exact mix will be determined by the position in which the plant will grow. Those grown outdoors will dry out more quickly and will need a slightly heavier mixture. Equal quantities of African violet mix and commercial potting mix are satisfactory for outdoor growing. If you are growing indoors, you can use violet mix, and the plants can be wick watered.

For *Achimenes*, fill a 100mm pot to within about one to one and one half inch of the top with mix. Place about five or six rhizomes on top of the mix and cover them. Larger pots or hanging baskets can be used if you have sufficient rhizomes. Large rhizomes such as smithianthas can be planted singly or in larger pots. Water lightly and place in good, bright light. Excess rhizomes can be grown in sheltered positions in the

garden, although the rhizomes may rot during periods of wet weather. A position with morning sun is ideal, with filtered light during the hottest part of the day. Plants will be lanky, and bloom production will be poor if the plant does not get sufficient light.

Once the shoots have emerged, you can give the plants a little more water. Fertilize your plants regularly with a balanced fertilizer if your mix does not already contain it. Slow release fertilizer (or any of the fertilizers suitable for violets) may be used. Once the plants have grown, they can be pinched back to give a more bushy plant.

Rhizomes that are planted in early spring will usually come into flower in early summer. *Achimenes* often begin to bloom just on Christmas with the peak bloom period being about February/March. Plants in the garden sometimes bloom later than those that are potted, but position will be a factor. Once the plant has bloomed, continue to water and feed it until the foliage shows signs of going dormant. Reduce the watering, and allow the plant to die back.

The plant will have produced a new crop of rhizomes during its growth period, and these may be stored in the pot until the following spring. Merely trim off the dead foliage and give the mix an occasional watering. When winter is over, empty the pot and harvest the rhizomes for replanting. They can be stored in a plastic bag in slightly damp vermiculite.

Rhizomes may be left in the pot to regrow in the coming season. However, it is recommended that they be completely repotted every two to three years, as the pots can become overcrowded, and the plants will not bloom as well.

Why not try growing from rhizomes? You will find that *Achimenes* are amongst the easiest of the gesneriads to grow and give a burst of color in summer. Perhaps you will then be tempted to try some of the other rhizomatous gesneriads.

From African Violet News, Official Journal of the
African Violet - Gesneriad Society of NSW, Inc.

Coming Events Deadlines

January/February AVM - November 1

March/April AVM - January 1

May/June AVM - March 1

July/August AVM - May 1

September/October AVM - July 1

November/December AVM - September 1

All events notices must be in writing.
Submit by Email <rrumsey@earthlink.net>
Fax: 409.839.4329 or
US Postal Service: AVSA Coming Events
2375 North St., Beaumont, TX 77702

For Novice Growers

by Ruth Coulson

You can't read too many books or go to too many meetings.

I have the good fortune to live where I can easily attend the meetings of three African violet groups. This means I can hear the talks given, see the plants exhibited, read the newsletters, and speak to the members of all these groups. There is a wealth of information and help available in this sort of interaction. I never fail to find the meetings helpful and inspirational. Most groups have a library of books and magazines. If you don't own the standard reference books, borrow them.

Even if you are not so conveniently situated, chances are there is at least one club in your area. You are sure to discover some snippet of information on each visit. If you have specific questions, there is always an opportunity to ask experienced growers, either during the open meeting or in person before or after the meetings. We are lucky that experienced African violet and gesneriad growers are always willing to share their knowledge.

Spend at least a small amount of time with your plants each day.

You might think this is impossible to fit into your busy life, but you will be surprised how much you can fit into even just five minutes per day. If you just water two plants each day, by the end of the week, there are fourteen plants that haven't gone dry. If you just remove a handful of dead flowers each day, by the end of the week, the plants will greet you with a much fresher smile. A plant can be repotted in five minutes – that's seven plants repotted by the end of the week, and so on.

Yes, we all will fall down on this occasionally, but so long as we stick to it most of the time, we are doing well.

Of course, there are some growers who spend a lot of time each day with their plants. You will easily see the benefit in the quality of plants that they grow. But we must tailor the amount of time we spend on our hobby to the amount of other things we have to achieve in the day. So just spend the amount of time you are comfortable, but do it regularly.

Not only your plants will benefit, incidentally. A few moments of quiet time with the plants is an excellent antidote to stress, and you will benefit as much as the plants. Everything in harmony, you see.

Working with your plants each day will also enable you to spot problems as soon as they start - whether a pest infestation or other growing irregularities. When these things are detected and dealt with early, there is much less impact on your plants. You also probably won't have to spend so much time dealing with a problem that is attacked early, either.

Never try to grow more plants than your space and time allow.

Laugh if you must. I am as bad as anyone. This is the area where all good intentions fall away and few of us can resist the urge to add "just one more plant". But seriously, we can't expect to grow plants that we can enjoy if we are spreading our time too thinly over too many. And they will never achieve their potential if too many are thrust in too small an area. Nor will they ever do well if time doesn't allow you to keep them watered, fertilized, potted, and so on.

From *The African Violet*, publication of the
AV Association of Australia, Inc.

Ways With Leaves

by Patricia Egan

At our end of year meetings, we usually go back to basics for the benefit of our newer members. As they are all keen to produce their own African violets, the demonstrations on propagating by "putting down" leaves are always very popular.

The procedure is simple, and there is not a lot of variety in the methods used, but as in all things to do with African violets, different growers have different methods.

To begin with, what to grow them in? There is nothing to be gained by standing leaves in water to develop roots before planting. I will not go into the arguments concerning "water roots" versus "soil roots" etc., but the fact is that leaves rooted in water take just as long to produce plantlets after being planted up as those which are potted directly into potting mix,

so why bother?

Some potting mediums include: standard potting mix (usually peat, vermiculite, perlite and charcoal), vermiculite and perlite mix, standard potting mix "diluted" with perlite/vermiculite, and standard potting mix with a "pocket" of vermiculite in the center.

Most of us have tried them all and found no added benefits in using anything other than regular potting mix. Leaves root readily in it, and the babies have no trouble in getting through to the surface - simplicity wins out again!

From *"African Violet News"*, Official Journal of the
AV-Gesneriad Society of NSW, Inc.

Texas-Style Potting Method

by Pauline Bartholomew

From her book *Growing to Show*

Since man first took plants out of the ground and began growing them in containers, the search for better potting methods, better potting mixes, and better watering procedures has never ceased. Then the Texas-Style potting method comes along and creates quite a stir in the African violet world. It is so simple that the question has often been asked, "Why wasn't it discovered before?" Well, countless horticulturists have been within a hairsbreadth of it through one technique or another. The common failing of all of these techniques has been the cultural sophistication required or the costly or complicated paraphernalia involved.

The Texas-Style potting method was developed by Jodi Davis of Austin, Texas. Through years of brainwashing by the Texans, we have come to associate anything from Texas as being bigger and better! This applies to everything from cattle to men. Now we can add African violets. Even in Japan, there is a statue of Buddha that is popularly called "Texas Buddha" because of its enormous size. It was very considerate of Mrs. Davis to be living in Texas when she came up with this idea. Texas-Style would never have had the same impact if the method were called by any other name.

At the time I learned of this method, I didn't know Mrs. Davis was calling it "Nature's Way." After I tried it, I was so enthusiastic about the results that I started talking and writing about, for want of a better description, "Texas-Style." The name stuck. Jodi finally gave up, and at the AVSA convention in 1978 in Austin, Texas, she proclaimed the official name to be Texas-style.

Like all African violet growers, Mrs. Davis wanted to find a better way to grow these sometimes contrary plants. She began researching and reading everything she could find on how they originally grew in their natural habitat. She soon found some common factors. Many of the species grew in a shallow layer of rich compost created by dense forest foliage and other materials. Under the layer of compost was a layer of rocky rubble. The roots grew down into the rubble, and frequent rains washed down through the rubble, and kept the roots moist. She simply applied those principles to container-grown African violets.

The simplicity of the Texas-Style potting method has made it popular for growing most types of houseplants. But, to quote Ken Bowman, "It's the best thing that ever happened to African violets." The method is easy to learn, almost any pot can be used, the materials are readily available, and it takes much of the guesswork out of watering. Since plant growth is greatly accelerated, the foliage is lush and more blossoms are produced. Texas-Style consists basically of a shallow layer of coarse, pebbly, inert material and a shallow

layer of potting mix. The plants are watered from the bottom with a dilute fertilizer solution.

Mrs. Davis used coarse, granite gravel (turkey grits) to duplicate the layer of rubble found in nature. I changed to perlite about the third time I hauled an 80-lb. bag of gravel out of the trunk of my car. The principle - air spaces formed by the material - is the same for both. The watering procedure differs slightly because of the porosity of the perlite. Gravel takes up water exclusively by capillary attraction while perlite has some initial absorption, and then the remainder of the water is taken up by capillary attraction.

WHY TEXAS-STYLE WORKS

Respiration takes place in two areas of plants: foliage and root tips. It is essential to the health of plants that a free flow of air is available to both of these areas. The leaves should be kept free of dust and grime and the roots should have ample breathing space. The magic of Texas-Style takes place in the perlite layer. The following two actions take place in that layer.

AIR SPACES IN THE PERLITE LAYER ALLOW THE FREE EXCHANGE OF GASES AT THE ROOT TIPS: Like humans, plants have to breathe to live. We take in oxygen and give off carbon dioxide. Plants do just the opposite. They take in carbon dioxide and give off oxygen. This transfer is called the "gas exchange." Whether in plants or animals, the gas exchange can take place only in air. Air spaces are present in a porous potting mix, but to a lesser, more restricted degree. By providing the root system with additional air space in the perlite layer, plant growth is given a big boost.

ROOTS HAVE FREE ACCESS TO MOISTURE AND NUTRIENTS IN THE PERLITE LAYER: Even under optimum conditions, getting the proper amount of water and nourishment is a traumatic experience for the roots of container grown plants. The roots are in competition with the soil for water which, to some degree, is made physically unavailable by absorption into the peat moss. Nutrients are also, to some degree, made chemically unavailable by the pH of the soil mix.

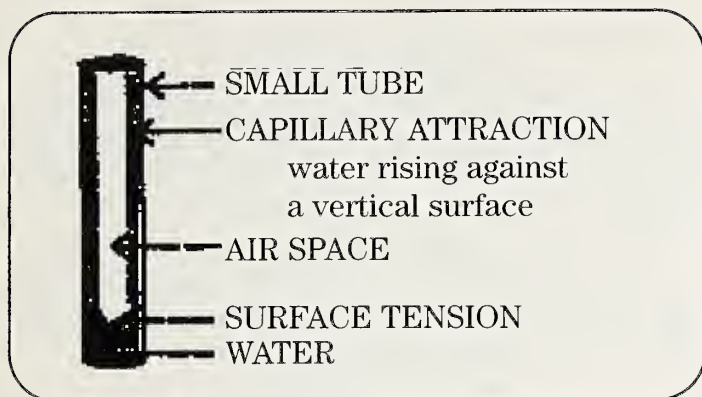
HOW TEXAS-STYLE WORKS

The nutrient solution in the saucer is drawn up to the root system by capillary attraction. The air spaces between particles, including the perlite layer, or particles in the potting mix, form a myriad of little "tubes" or capillaries.

CAPILLARY: Having a very small internal diameter, as a tube.

CAPILLARY ATTRACTION: The force that causes a liquid to rise against a vertical surface such as water in a small glass vial.

SURFACE TENSION: The molecules in water create tension, such as water beading on a smooth surface. It is this tension that starts the action of capillary attraction.



PRINCIPLES OF WATERING TEXAS- STYLE

Watering used to be one of the most difficult skills to learn in growing African violets. With the conventional method of potting and top watering, it would take the beginning grower many years to learn how to water properly. With Texas-Style, I have seen determined new growers win a Best in Show award in less than six months.

Drowning was the most common method of killing violets. After many warnings from veteran growers, the beginner would be so afraid of overwatering that the root ball would rattle around dry in the pot. There was an old saying, "When in doubt, don't water." With Texas-Style it has become, "When in doubt, water."

Texas-Style allows a wider margin of forgiveness over conventional methods for overwatering and underwatering. The roots have breathing space, even if the novice is somewhat heavy-handed with the water. On the other hand, the

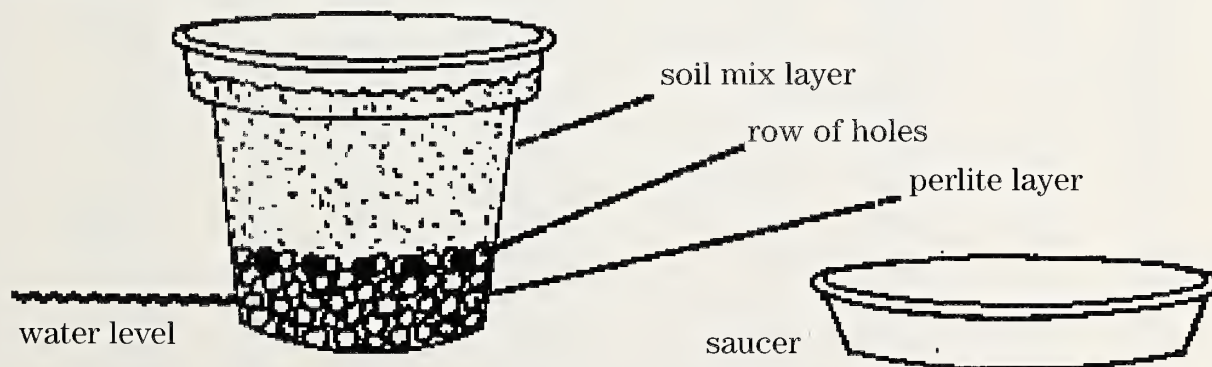
perlite layer retains enough moisture to maintain the roots if too little water is given. Remember, a "margin" is allowed. Swamp-like or desert-like conditions will not be forgiven, at least not if it happens more than two or three times to the same plant.

Almost exact amounts of water and intervals between watering can be determined for Texas-Style. Even the beginner can have healthy plants from the start. However, as experience is gained, watering skills can be developed to a high degree of accuracy. An experienced grower adds just the right amount of water a plant needs to sustain it for optimum growth until the next watering day.

The primary way of developing watering skill is by learning to judge the moisture content of a pot by feeling the top of the soil. The experienced grower can also tell from the heft of the pot how much moisture remains. (*This was another reason I changed from granite gravel to perlite for Texas-Style. The weight of the gravel ruined my finely-honed heft!*) For example, a pot that still feels heavy at the end of the watering interval means that one of four conditions exist:

1. The plant has been recently potted so that the root system is not yet mature enough to use up all the water.
2. A particular variety has a genetically sparse or weak root system so that water is not being used to the fullest extent. If this is the case, do not pot these varieties beyond a 4" or 5" pot.
3. A particular variety has an exceptionally dense, heavy root system. I have grown only two varieties with this characteristic. I never got used to it and was alarmed by the weight of the pots everytime I picked up the plants.
4. The roots have been damaged by a pest or pathogen to the extent that the plant no longer has a full complement of healthy roots to take up the water.

TEXAS-STYLE POTTING METHOD



Planting by Moon Signs

Moon in Aries

Barren and dry, fiery and masculine. Used for destroying noxious growths, weeds, pests, etc., and for cultivating.

Moon in Taurus

Productive and moist, earthy and feminine. Used for planting many crops, particularly potatoes and root crops, and when hardiness is important. Also used for lettuce, cabbage, and similar leafy vegetables.

Moon in Gemini

Barren and dry, airy and masculine. Used for destroying noxious growths, weeds and pests, and for cultivation.

Moon in Cancer

Very fruitful and moist, watery and feminine. This is the most productive sign, used extensively for planting and irrigation.

Moon in Leo

Barren and dry, fiery and masculine. This is the most barren sign, used only for killing weeds and for cultivation.

Moon in Virgo

Barren and moist, earthy and feminine. Good for cultivation and destroying weeds and pests.

Moon in Libra

Semi-fruitful and moist, airy and masculine. Used for planting many crops and producing good pulp growth and roots. A very good sign for flowers and vines. Also used for seeding hay, corn fodder, etc.

Moon in Scorpio

Very fruitful and moist, watery and feminine. Nearly as productive as Cancer; used for the same purposes. Especially good for vine growth and sturdiness.

Moon in Sagittarius

Barren and dry, fiery and masculine. Used for planting onions, seeding hay, and for cultivation.

Moon in Capricorn

Productive and dry, earthy and feminine. Used for planting potatoes, tubers, etc.

Moon in Aquarius

Barren and dry, airy and masculine. Used for cultivation and destroying noxious growths, weeds, and pests.

Moon in Pisces

Very fruitful and moist, watery and feminine. Used along with Cancer and Scorpio, especially good for root growth.

May Moon Table

Date	Sign	Element	Nature	Phase
1 Thu.	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	New 7:15 am
2 Fri. 10:27 pm	Gemini	Air	Barren	1st
3 Sat.	Gemini	Air	Barren	1st
4 Sun.	Gemini	Air	Barren	1st
5 Mon. 10:42 am	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	1st
6 Tue.	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	1st
7 Wed. 8:46 pm	Leo	Fire	Barren	1st
8 Thu.	Leo	Fire	Barren	1st
9 Fri.	Leo	Fire	Barren	2nd 6:53 am
10 Sat. 3:31 am	Virgo	Earth	Barren	2nd
11 Sun.	Virgo	Earth	Barren	2nd
12 Mon. 6:42 am	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	2nd
13 Tue.	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	2nd
14 Wed. 7:14 am	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	2nd
15 Thu.	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	Full 10:36 pm
16 Fri. 6:43 am	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	3rd
17 Sat.	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	3rd
18 Sun. 7:03 am	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	3rd
19 Mon.	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	3rd
20 Tue. 10:01 am	Aquarius	Air	Barren	3rd
21 Wed.	Aquarius	Air	Barren	3rd
22 Thu. 4:41 pm	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	4th 7:31 pm
23 Fri.	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	4th
24 Sat.	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	4th
25 Sun. 2:59 am	Aries	Fire	Barren	4th
26 Mon.	Aries	Fire	Barren	4th
27 Tue. 3:32 pm	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th
28 Wed.	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th
29 Thu.	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th
30 Fri. 4:32 am	Gemini	Air	Barren	1st 11:20 pm
31 Sat.	Gemini	Air	Barren	1st

June Moon Table

Date	Sign	Element	Nature	Phase
1 Sun. 4:27 pm	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	1st
2 Mon.	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	1st
3 Tue.	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	1st
4 Wed. 2:25 am	Leo	Fire	Barren	1st
5 Thu.	Leo	Fire	Barren	1st
6 Fri. 9:51 am	Virgo	Earth	Barren	1st
7 Sat.	Virgo	Earth	Barren	2nd 3:28 pm
8 Sun. 2:30 pm	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	2nd
9 Mon.	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	2nd
10 Tue. 4:39 pm	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	2nd
11 Wed.	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	2nd
12 Thu. 5:12 pm	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	2nd
13 Fri.	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	2nd
14 Sat. 5:38 pm	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	Full 6:16 am
15 Sun.	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	3rd
16 Mon. 7:41 pm	Aquarius	Air	Barren	3rd
17 Tue.	Aquarius	Air	Barren	3rd
18 Wed.	Aquarius	Air	Barren	3rd
19 Thu. 12:57 am	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	3rd
20 Fri.	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	3rd
21 Sat. 10:06 am	Aries	Fire	Barren	4th 9:45 am
22 Sun.	Aries	Fire	Barren	4th
23 Mon. 10:15 pm	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th
24 Tue.	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th
25 Wed.	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th
26 Thu. 11:13 am	Gemini	Air	Barren	4th
27 Fri.	Gemini	Air	Barren	4th
28 Sat. 10:52 pm	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	4th
29 Sun.	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	New 1:39 pm
30 Mon.	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	1st

Reprinted with permission from *Llewellyn's 2003 Moon Sign Book*, published by Llewellyn Publications, ISBN 0-7387-0070-3

GROOMING AND REPOTTING TRAILERS

by Sue Gardner

If you have a trailer that needs grooming and re-potting and don't know where to start, you may like to use the following steps as a guide.

- Remove all flowers.
- Remove marked and dead leaves.
- Remove leaves with long petioles as follows -

Look at diagram (1). The seven outside leaves have long petioles and should be removed. If you look at diagram (2), you will see how to remove these leaves, leaving a slight stub. This means you do not damage the tiny side-shoot in the leaf axil, allowing it to grow. When the new shoots grow from these axils, a more bushy plant develops. Flowers grow from the axils of leaves nearest the growing tip of each crown on your trailer. So when more side-shoots develop into crowns, you will have more flowers on your plant.

Look at your trailer from above. If any crown has a longer stem than the others, causing the plant to look lopsided, cut the tip off to make it the same length as the other main stems. See diagram (3). This will make the plant more balanced and encourage the short newer crowns to grow. Remove plant carefully from the pot. Select a shallow bowl a size larger than before. Trailers seem to prefer wide shallow bowls. Carefully remove as much old potting mix without damaging the roots. As you have not cut the stems of the plant too severely, it needs its entire root system to support it and allow it to grow more quickly. So don't trim the roots.

After placing a new wick in the bowl and writing the plant name on the side, place the plant in the center. Fill potting mix around the plant, but do not cover the stems. Water sparingly with tepid water and place on reservoir. Put the plant in a well lit position and watch it grow!



Diagram (1)

This is the front view of one growing point of a trailer.

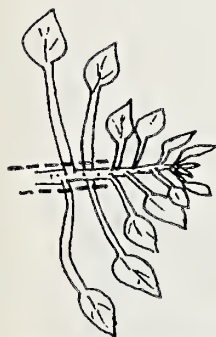


Diagram (2)

This is a section of a side view of diagram (1)



Diagram (3)

Looking down on a plant in a pot. Imagine leaves are removed so that stems are visible.

From the Newsletter of the Early Morn AV Group Australia



AVSA.org

Growing African Violets from Seed

by Peg Eaton

Growing violets from seed is a very different experience – and one that violet growers should try sometime just for fun (and it could make a GREAT club project!). Besides, those seeds you sow could reap something spectacular and unusual that you could then name and register with AVSA!

Here's the scoop. Certain seed houses – Park's Seeds is one that comes to mind – list various types of African violet seed for sale. For example – “classics,” “fantasy hybrids”, and “fantasy trailing.” You can also, with a little luck and a lot of patience, produce your own seed from plants that you may have at home - but that's a story for another time.

African violets are actually fairly easy to grow from seed, once you get past the germination stage. Plus, to go from seed to blooming plant takes about the same time (approximately five to seven months) as from leaf propagation and you're likely to get a LOT more plants to share with friends!

To start, fill a wide, shallow container with soilless mix containing vermiculite and perlite (which has been thoroughly moistened ahead of time with warm water). A clear plastic one pound “deli” container with a lid makes a good germination container. Poke several holes in the bottom for drainage. Once your container has been prepared, you are ready to sow your violet seeds. Be aware that violet seed is very tiny – almost like large dust particles! So it might be a good idea to empty your seed packet onto a piece of scored white paper. You can then gently tap the paper to sprinkle the seeds onto the top of the moistened medium in your container. It's really not necessary to cover the seeds with your soilless mix – you can just lightly press the seeds down a tiny bit into the medium. Then cover your container - either with a plastic bag or clear lid and place in a spot that is warm and receives good light. If your soilless

mix was sufficiently moist to start, there's no need to water any more until after your seedlings start to grow.

With a bit of luck and good conditions, your seeds should germinate in about two weeks. When your seedlings look big enough to handle, with the largest leaves about the size of a dime, you should transplant them into individual small pots, like solo cups or condiment cups with holes for drainage or small 2 1/4" pots. Keep in mind, however, that your baby African violets will still be tender and may need some TLC – so keeping young seedlings in a covered terrarium or greenhouse, or putting plastic bags over the pots is recommended until they are larger and stronger.

Just as if you had propagated your baby plants from mother leaf, your plants will eventually get big enough to bloom. But unlike plants propagated from a mother leaf – where the plantlets are an exact replica of their “mother” – with seedlings you can never know what to expect. Of course, you may get a lot of plain, purple violets – as purple is a very dominant color. But depending upon the parentage of your seedlings, which you may or may not know, you can get a whole range of colors, sizes, and leaf types. If you've got the room, bring whatever plants you can into bloom, and then give away those that don't really “speak” to you. Your friends, neighbors, co-workers, and club members will all be thrilled! If you're lucky enough to get something fairly exotic looking or very different from other hybrids, be sure and start rooting leaves of that plant to see if it “blooms true” through three generations. If so, you can then name your new African violet and possibly register it with AVSA!

From *Ye Bay Stater*, publication of the Bay State AVS



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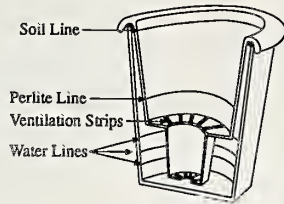
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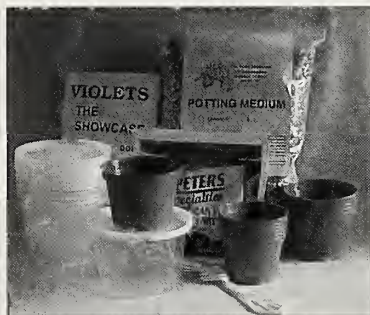
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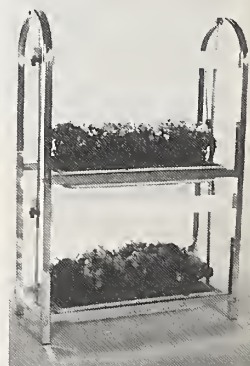
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2-3/8"	Wt. or TC	Rd. Tub	1.10	2.25	4.25	8.00	38.00
2-1/2"	Gr. or Wt.	Rd. or Sq.	1.15	2.40	4.55	8.60	40.50
3"	Gr. or Wt.	Rd. Tub, Std. Sq.	1.30	2.95	5.25	9.80	44.50
3-1/2"	Gr. or Wt.	Rd. Tub	1.45	3.60	6.60	12.00	55.00
4"	Gr. or Wt.	Rd. Tub	1.75	3.85	7.25	13.50	59.40
4-1/2"	Gr. or Wt.	Rd. Tub	2.40	5.60	8.00	15.50	73.00
5"	Gr. or Wt.	Rd. Tub	2.90	6.75	12.50	23.00	105.00
6"	Gr. or Wt.	Rd. Tub	3.40	8.20	15.40	28.80	134.00
6-1/2"	Gr. or Wt.	Rd. Tub	4.00	9.50	18.00	34.00	160.00

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			1.40	7.15	13.25	24.00	42.00

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3-12-6	Bloom	4.95	7.95	12.00
9-3-6	Foliage Pro	4.95		11.00
0-0-3	Pro-Tekt	4.95		10.00
Concentrate	K-L-N	10.00		
Neem Oil		11.50		
Dolomite Limestone				2 lbs./\$1.75
Charcoal		20 oz.		40 oz.
No. 4 Coarse or	No. 6 Medium	1.85		3.50
Vermiculite	No. 2 Coarse	4 qts.	8 qts.	16 qts.
Perlite	Coarse	1.75	3.00	5.75
Canadian Peat Moss		1.75	3.00	5.75
TROY Capillary watering mat - a full 4 feet wide		\$1.75		\$5.50
\$2.40 per running yard - whole yard lengths				